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THE HOLY ROSARY;

CONSIDERED IN SHORT ADDRESSES,

WITH

EXAMPLES,

AND

ARRANGED FOR THE MONTH OF MAY.

BY

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PREFACE.

As in the days of St. Dominic, so in our days, the rosary is a prayer sent to heaven, in bodily and spiritual distress. If we reflect upon the blessings drawn from heaven by this devotion, we cannot but feel compelled to its frequent recital. How many are the calamities that now-a-days befall us poor, frail creatures? To ward off such in the future, and to comfort and strengthen us when suffering under their heavy burden, the holy fathers admonish us to call upon Mary, our good Mother and powerful Mediatrix with God.—How many are the dangers of losing our souls in this faithless nineteenth century? To save our souls from infidelity, atheism, sins and vices of all kinds, we should practise that useful devotion introduced by St. Dominic,—the holy rosary, which, as in those days, will be to us now a rich source of blessings.

Animated by the desire of seeing this devotion still more practised, as also of instructing, so that by its frequent recital bountiful fruits may be reaped from this devotion, I have arranged this

little book into thirty-one addresses with examples, for each day of the month of May, since this month is held sacred to Mary by all faithful, practical Catholics. There are also added: the Litany of Loretto with some other prayers which may be recited profitably after the address. The whole is intended for May—devotions in church or chapel, or privately at home. But it will prove beneficial at any time, and is therefore recommended to members of the Sodality of the B. V. Mary and to members of the confraternity of the holy rosary, and to all devout servants of Mary.

As to the work itself I beg to excuse slight faults; as to the contents I have made some little use of German works. May it assist in praying well to Mary. And may our blessed Lady deign to look upon it with pleasure, and bless all that use it.

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FIRST DAY OF MAY.

WHY SHALL WE VENERATE MARY?

"Hail, O Queen, O Mother of mercy! hail, our life, our comfort, and our hope!" With cheerful hearts we greet the month of May—the month so beautifully adorned by God and consecrated by our holy Church to the veneration of God's blessed Mother Mary. It leads us again to the heart of Mary and makes us ever more familiar with her, our dear Mother. Gentle month of May! Thy roses are blossoming at Mary's throne; thy violets send forth sweet odor on her altars; thy gentle breeze, like angel melodies, fill her many temples. Pious, holy songs glorifying the holy Queen of May resound from the loving hearts of her children, and from on high the Mother spreads blessingly her gracious hands over them.

"Hail, O Queen, O Mother of Mercy!" exclaims every devout Christian from the bottom of his heart to-day; "hail, our life, our comfort, and our hope!" Yea, we salute thee, Mary, Virgin, Mother, Queen; and upon you, angels of heaven and saints of God, we call to descend and join in our melodies of praise; for the time is solemn alike to

you as to us; the Mother whom we piously venerate, is your and our Queen,—the Queen of heaven and earth.

Prepare then your hearts, children of Mary, raise your thoughts to her heavenly throne; for we shall appear oftener before our blessed Mother during this month of May than at any other season; we shall venerate her with a loving heart and pious soul; we shall devote this month of May to her special service. But did it ever occur to you in venerating Mary, to ask why we should venerate her? Objections to this service, no doubt are numerous. Be not misled. In order to overcome them and to be encouraged to a more ardent practise of this devotion, we shall first reflect upon the reason why we should venerate Mary, and then consider the manner in which we should venerate her, and finally and at greater length, how we venerate Mary especially by the devotion of the rosary.

Should a Christian soul ever ask, why should Mary be venerated? Who is Mary? What is her dignity? Monarchs of this earth are invested with high dignity, and millions of subjects pay them their homage. Greater than earthly monarchs are the saints of God. Their praise resounds upon this entire globe, and the Omnipotent himself glorifies them by numerous miracles. Great also are the angelic choirs. They stand in God's presence obeying and performing His holy

will. But, behold, greater than all these is Mary, infinitely greater I would almost say. Why? Because she is the Mother of God. Man and angel, with all their dignity, can never ascend to a higher state than that of being a servant of God; whilst Mary is the One who brought forth the Son of God; and she alone can say to Christ Jesus: "Thou art my Son,—I am Thy Mother." O, how sublime, how marvellous is Mary's dignity! We can never understand the sublimity and majesty of God, neither shall we be able to comprehend Mary's sublime dignity. Hence St. Bernard remarks: "The honor and dignity of being the Mother of God is so excellent, that it is reserved to God alone to understand it perfectly." And St. Bonaventure says: "Mary possesses an unspeakable dignity. God indeed could have created a larger earth than the present; he could have created a more spacious heaven than the present: but he could not create a greater mother than the Mother of God."

Mary, then, being the Mother of God, should we not honor her? Indeed the honor we pay her is most acceptable to God. We know how a good child rejoices when hearing the praise of its parents. But is not Christ Jesus, the Incarnate of the Heavenly Father, the best among all sons? How must He rejoice when we bestow according to our ability honor upon his Mother? "To honor

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a mother," says St. Jerome, "means also to confer honor upon the son. We cannot doubt that the honor we give to Mary, also tends to the glorification of her Son."

And what honor did God himself bestow upon Mary? From among the millions of her sex the Heavenly Father had chosen her to become the Mother of His dearly beloved Son; He has divided, so to speak, with her His Son, so that if He could say: "I am Thy Father," she could say: "I am Thy Mother." What honor did Jesus bestow upon her? From her He assumed human nature, was born by her, was subject to her, would call her not only during his earthly career, but throughout all eternity: His Mother. Did He not honor His Mother publicly at the wedding-feast of Canaa? Did He hanging upon the cross in great agony not remember His Mother, and entrust her to the care of St. John?—What honor has the Holy Ghost conferred upon her? He chose her to be His spouse, calling on her in the words of the canticle of canticles: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee;" (4. 7.) and again: "Thou art beautiful, O my love, sweet and comely." (6. 3.) And shall we not imitate the example of the Triune God? Well, then, we can do so by venerating Mary, upon whom the most blessed Trinity has bestowed such honor.

The holy Scriptures command us to praise God

in his saints. But above all saints is Mary, the Queen of saints. Hence she deserves greatest honor; and by venerating her God is also magnified. Holy Writ tells us to honor father and mother. But Mary is our Mother in a more sublime sense of the word than our earthly mother. To us living in the darkness of sin, being dead as to the soul and doomed to eternal exclusion from the heavenly home, Mary gave us the life, gave us Christ Jesus, by whom we were again restored to life; and there, on Calvary's bloody height, where she consented to the death of her Son for the redemption of the world, she gave us our spiritual life. "In Jesus, the one Saviour of mankind," says the abbot William, "Mary has borne many to salvation; by bearing the life she has borne many to life." Shall we then not honor and venerate Mary, our dear Mother?

Look upon the saints and holy doctors of our church. From the Apostolic age down to the present day, they unanimously invite us to venerate the ever blessed Virgin Mary. Their writings give ample proof of the belief and practise regarding the blessed Mother of God throughout all centuries. Indeed St. Bernard is but the interpreter of their sentiments, when he exclaims: "Let us venerate Mary with all tenderness of our hearts, with all power of our minds, with all ardor of our sentiments; for such is the will of God,

who bestows upon her all graces which He desires to give to us by the hands of Mary." And how did the faithful of past ages correspond to this invitation of the holy fathers? How did they venerate Mary? Wander over this terrestrial globe; everywhere you will find churches, altars and monuments, bearing her name and erected in her honor. Open the annals of ecclesiastical history, and almost every page points out sincere servants and venerators of Mary. You will read how mighty potentates have served Mary and placed their dominions under her maternal care; you will see the subjects animated by the zeal of their princes band together and establish sodalities and confraternities in honor and under the protection of the heavenly Queen. In short, all vied with one another in serving Mary; and thus was her prophecy fulfilled: "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." (Luc. 1. 48.) Yea, behold how the Triune God has honored Mary, how the disciples and followers of Christ,—the christians of all ages heretofore, have honored Mary. Is this not reason enough that we also honor Mary? Well, then, let us resolve to follow their example.

EXAMPLE.

St. Philip Neri distinguished himself by his love of Mary. In his earliest childhood not a day pass-

ed, on which he did not honor her by some pious practice or some work of mortification. He called her his dear Mother, his beloved patroness, his joy. When speaking of her his face became radiant with joy, and all his hearers felt their zeal growing by his speech. Never did he preach or instruct without mentioning the sweet name of Mary. In all his actions he remembered her; in all his words he praised her. Therefore he was blessed by his heavenly Mother with special benefits and graces, and was favored with an apparition of her. The most precious of the graces he received through her intercession was, as he said, his profound adoration of the Most Holy Eucharist. He lived and died—a faithful servant of Mary.

PRAYER.

O Mother of fair love! show me thy glory and fill me with admiration to thee—the most beautiful work of thy and my Creator. Replenish me with love to thee who didst give me Jesus—the fruit of the love of God, who still givest me Jesus, and teach me to know Him, to love Him, thus to gain His mercy. Look with pleasure upon the small tokens of my love and obtain by thy intercession for me a holy spirit that I may always honor thee and pray to thee in spirit and in truth. Amen.

SECOND DAY OF MAY.

WHY SHALL WE VENERATE MARY?

The veneration of Mary, Christian souls, is a great happiness for us all. "Blessed," we can say, in the words of holy Scriptures, "blessed they that stand in thy service and work in thy presence." Do we not consider it a distinction, if we are permitted to approach renowned persons, to remain in their presence, to communicate with them? Does not an humble man consider himself extremely happy, if noble persons condescend to pay attention to him, to accept gratefully his gift or service? And yet what are they?—Frail, sinful beings, mere dust. But if we venerate and serve Mary, what is our lot? We serve and honor the Queen of heaven, the Mother of God, and our dear Mother. If to serve Christ imparts the highest nobility, as the noble virgin and martyr, St. Agatha, affirms. if to serve God means to reign, then there is evidently next to the service of God no more honorable service than to serve and venerate Mary, His blessed Mother.

A glance at Mary's prerogatives will convince us of this and urge us to be zealous in this service.

Mary was created and formed by the Almighty to become the Mother of His incarnate Son. In this lies all. In it we have the certainty that Mary unites in herself all perfections and virtues of body and soul that have or could be ever possessed by any human being. God has manifested His greatest art in her. Therefore she is fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and no spot is in her. We admire persons who distinguish themselves by their good qualities,—be it by beauty, activity, or strength of body; by clear reason, good memory, or great knowledge; by self-sacrifice for the needy, purity, simplicity of heart, fidelity and the like virtues. Yet no one confines all these qualities, and at the same time in a most eminent degree, in his own person. What must be our veneration of Mary who herself possesses all this? "Thou art all fair, O my love," says the Holy Ghost, "and there is no spot in thee."

The prerogatives and good qualities of persons we acknowledge the more willingly, and they appear the greater to us, the closer such persons be to our hearts. If they be not only excellent, but also benefit us by their gifts; if they be not only admired, but also turn in love to us and impart to us, as it were, their glory: then our hearts do not remain in cold astonishment, but experience the greatest pleasure in their prerogatives and offer themselves with great enthusiasm. Thus children

would act towards their parents. They can hardly imagine that their parents have any faults; and should they command the respect of others, then it is the children's own happiness.

Now, Christian souls, we shall not stand in cold astonishment at the honor, glory, power and sanctity of Mary. She is indeed our Mother, we are her children; she is our Queen, we are her proteges, her people. All that she has is also ours. "Honor her, praise her,—great is our heavenly Queen!"—A diamond is not framed in lead, but in gold. Mary is the Mother of God; which dignity requires not an ordinary sanctity; but as in dignity, so also in sanctity must she excel all saintly beings. All saints, however, were stained by original sin,—Mary alone was conceived without it; all saints, even those who have borne their baptismal innocence into the grave, have committed some slight faults,—Mary alone was free from all actual sins, not the least breath of sin having dulled the mirror of her soul, pure as an angel. Hence, to her may be justly applied the words of the Holy Ghost: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee." What shall we say of her other virtues? She united all virtues in herself and possessed them in the most eminent degree. Hence St Thomas of Villanova says: "Whatever excellent is found in any saint, is to be seen in Mary. In her is the patience of Job, the meekness

of Moses, the faith of Abraham, the chastity of Joseph, the humility of David, the wisdom of Solomon, the zeal of Elias; in her is the purity of virgins, the fortitude of martyrs, the piety of confessors, the wisdom of doctors, the hermit's contempt of the world; in short, in her are all the gifts of the Holy Ghost." Should we, then, not admire her virtues? Should we not venerate her—this sublime model of all christians?

Again, the benefits to be derived are also a cause of our veneration of Mary. Would we prove how beneficial this service is, we would be compelled to enumerate all favors and graces which Mary bestowed at all times upon her faithful servants;—and this is impossible. Here also could we say: would I write all that is become known of Mary's kindness and mercy during all centuries of Christianity, the world almost could not contain the books that would be written. Each of the many thousand churches receiving pilgrims narrates an uninterrupted history of the benefits of Mary conferred by her during centuries upon her faithful servants. Every feast celebrated in her honor has its history,—and it is a history of Mary's mercy. Every title that we give her in the Litany of Loretto reminds us of a special gift, of a particular treasure in her possession which she distributes bountifully to all that approach her with childlike confidence. St. John says, that the heavenly Fath-

er gave us in His beloved Son all,—that is: certain hope of all that we need; so can we say of Mary, that she gave us her Divine Son, that she voluntarily offered Him, even to death, for the redemption of us sinners: how should she then not have given us in Him all,—that is: her whole maternal heart with constant willingness of helping all that confidently approach her?—Verily in none better than in the servants of Mary do the words of Scripture find application: "He that honoreth his mother, is as one that layeth up a treasure." (Eccl. 3. 5.) Hence, St. Theophilus says: "The Son rejoices, when His Mother requests something of Him; for He desires to impart all He does, to us for His Mother's sake, in order to reward in this manner all benefits which He received from her." And St. Bernard remarks: "Mary is given as a channel to the world, in order that the celestial gifts of God may flow continually through her upon mankind." Does Mary, then, not deserve our veneration?

Finally, Christian souls, the veneration of Mary is an important, perhaps even a necessary means of our salvation. It is true, indeed, God has not commanded us under pain of condemnation to venerate Mary; without this He will give us the necessary graces to be saved. But our sloth and unfaithfulness are so great that we need more than is properly our share. And this increase of grace we find most surely with our heavenly Mother.

Nor should any one think that on account of a few devotional acts performed in honor of Mary, he shall not be lost; that would be presumptuous and greatly dangerous to salvation. But certain it is, if one endeavors to effect a sincere conversion, or to lead a truly pious and holy life, and along with his good endeavors venerates Mary, he need never despair of his eternal welfare. Why?—Because Mary will assist and protect him. The saints gladly represent Mary as the administratrix of all of God's graces; and because she is the Mother of the great family of God, all graces pass through her hands. "Behold, my brethren," says St. Bernard, "how vivid according to God's will our veneration of Mary should be, since He has filled her with all graces, so that if we have any grace of faith, hope or other virtue, it assuredly came to us from the fulness of grace that is in Mary. Extinguish the star that illuminates the world, and what will become of day? Mary is the star of the ocean; where she does not shine, there darkness enshrouds us." The ecclesiastical doctors regard the veneration and love of Mary as one of the certain signs of election. "He that findeth me," she can say in the words of holy Scripture, "findeth life and draweth salvation from the Lord." Does not all this give sufficient reason, why we should venerate Mary? Let us, then, follow the words and examples of all faithful servants of

Mary, and our lot shall be like theirs—the glories of heaven.

EXAMPLE.

St. Francis of Sales, of whom it can be said, that his heart was a true likeness of the most sacred heart of Jesus, possessed an extraordinary, tender love to Mary, the ever blessed Virgin. From the days of childhood he venerated Mary by special prayers and with remarkable devotion. Those prayers he recited daily. When he became sixteen years of age he was tempted by that dreadful thought, that belonging to the reprobate he could no longer love God. In his despondency, anxiety and torture of mind, he prostrated himself before an altar of the blessed Virgin, and recited amid tears the "Memorare." Hardly had he finished, when he already felt the assistance of Mary; the evil spirit was forced to flee; comfort and joy re-entered his heart. Therefore as a mark of gratitude he daily recited the rosary in honor of Mary, and continued to do so during forty years so faithfully, that he did not omit one day despite his many labors and oft enfeebled strength the recital of this prayer. Let us follow his example.

PRAYER.

I salute thee, Mary, thou kindest Virgin! thou art my Mother, my Lady! I therefore beseech

thee to accept me as thy son and servant, for I desire to have no other mother and lady, but thee. I pray thee, good Mother, may it please thee to comfort me in all my anxieties and both corporal and spiritual necessities. Lead me upon all my ways and in all my actions guide thou and protect me, for I, poor creature, am much in need of thy protection. Shield my body and my soul against all evils and dangers, and let me partake of thy virtues on earth and of thy riches in heaven. Amen.

THIRD DAY OF MAY.

HOW SHALL WE VENERATE MARY?

"My beloved brethren," says St. Jerome, "love her whom you honor, and honor her whom you love. But you love and honor her truly only when you wish with all your heart to become like unto her, upon whom you bestow honor." This is the only means of making our veneration of Mary sincere and gracious.

We come to Mary and behold in her the Virgin most pure. Our holy church calls Mary the "Mother of Christ, Mother most pure, Mother undefiled." And, indeed, could Mary have become the Mother of Christ—"the sun of justice," if she were stained by sin? "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee," says the Holy Ghost of her. Could Mary have borne Him in whose sight sin is an abomination, if she had been defiled by sin? Certainly not; for "if mention be made of sin," says St. Augustine, "I except only the blessed Virgin. . . . . She was endowed more bountifully with graces than she needed in order to overcome all sins." And St. Cyprian remarks: "Neither propriety nor justice permits that this chosen vessel

be defiled by the universal stain of sin ; she had in common with us only nature, but not the guilt." Hence we cannot love her truly, nor can she love us, unless we imitate her purity, unless we have a perfect horror of sin.

It is true, none of us need glory as if he were without sin. Does not Christ teach us to pray to the heavenly Father: "Forgive us our trespasses ?" Does not our holy church direct our words in saying to the blessed Mother of God : "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and in the hour of our death ?" Yet let us remember, it is not said that we must approach her without sin; but we must approach with a heart filled with great horror of sin. It is quite different to fall, to fall even deep through weakness, and to love the fall; the fetters that we do not wish to abandon are quite different from those that we carry with reluctance and would desire to leave.

Now, Christian souls, this fall, these fetters are mortal sin. Mortal sin is a voluntary, intentional transgression of God's commandments or of the Church's precepts in an important point; it is an unwarranted rebellion against the Most High God, it is the basest ingratitude to our heavenly Father who showered so many favors, benefits and graces upon us; it is a renewal of that terrible spectacle on Calvary—the renewal of Christ's crucifixion; it is the tearing asunder of that holy band of love

that binds man to his God; it is the stamp of the most degraded slavery in the power of the infernal spirit; it is plunging the dagger into your own soul. "O you all that love God," exclaims, therefore, St. Francis of Sales, "fear and tremble, if you but hear the word—mortal sin; for there is nothing which the great God hates and curses more than it. On account of mortal sin only does hell burn and shall burn forever." How, then, can a man that loves mortal sin and is thereby a slave of Satan, call himself a servant of her who called herself with perfect right, and in truth, a handmaid of the Lord, and who stands in everlasting enmity with this infernal serpent and its adherents? How can an eye staring in lust look up to her who is called the "Mother most chaste," the "Virgin most pure?" How can lips flowing over with curses, blasphemies and vile language, pronounce the sweet name "Mary?" How can hands stained by violence, theft, injustice, the blood of poor orphans and widows, raise themselves to her who is called the "Mirror of justice?" How, in short, can any one, covered with the filth of sin and vice, and no desire of cleansing himself, approach this model of sanctity? 'Tis impossible for such to honor Mary.

It is well to pray often to the blessed Mother of God, to belong to her sodalities, to visit her altars frequently, to carry upon one's person her picture

or medal. But for such an one who indulges shameful passions, and abominable habits, entertains dangerous, sinful company, hates, calumniates and persecutes his fellow-men, and abuses the holy Sacraments without the least remorse, it would indeed be mockery, it would mean nothing else than to renew the bitter passion of Christ, and as Mary suffered spiritually what Christ suffered corporally according to the holy fathers, it would to a certain extent mean to plunge anew the sword of sorrow into the maternal heart of Mary, and to mock her in those indescribable sufferings endured with her Divine Son for our salvation. It would be the same as if the cruel executioners on Mount Calvary had saluted her standing under the cross: "Hail, Mary!"

Yet, Christian souls, you may say: I am not so bad, I do not commit mortal sin, I do not renew the Passion of Christ and with it the sufferings of his afflicted Mother Mary. But, is your soul free from venial sin? "The just man falleth seven times a day" we are informed. True, venial sin is not as bad as mortal sin. It is not the death of the soul; but a sickness, so to speak, that may easily lead to the death of the soul; it is not a total separation from God, but it is a gradual withdrawal from God's friendship; it is not the destruction of the soul and of sanctifying grace, but it is the disfigurement of it, and for these reasons far worse

than any temporal misfortune. Hence, St. Chrysostom remarks: "Shun venial sins, for great sins arise therefrom."

A true servant of Mary will also despise venial sins. Every one can with the help of God's grace avoid committing venial sins intentionally and voluntarily; but faults committed through weakness, oversight, haste or negligence, will not be so readily overcome. Yet by constant watchfulness and steady combat they will be lessened. Should we be careless in this regard? How dare we look into that "Mirror of justice," if we daily stain our souls with the injustice of wilful venial sins? How dare we call Mary the "Mother of divine grace," and expect to receive this grace through her intercession, if we so carelessly lessen it in our souls?—No; let such never more occur. We can serve Mary best by shunning above all, mortal sin, and avoiding as much as in our power all venial sins.

Like her Divine Son, Mary can also say: "I have left you an example, that you follow me." She was free from original sin; she was free from all, even the least actual sin; what pleasure to our good Mother, Mary, if we strive to acquire such purity? Yea, not only free from all sins do we behold her, but also see in her the brightest model of all virtues. Hence to venerate Mary we should, as best we can, practise all virtues. The devout Richard remarks: "They only are true children of

Mary, and deserving of this beautiful name, who endeavor to live as Mary has lived." And indeed among all saints, Mary is the most glorious example; for she who was "full of grace" possessed all virtues in a most eminent degree. Look upon her virginal purity, her love to God and man, her humility, her piety, her patience and her resignation to the will of God. What better could you do than to follow her in these and all other virtues? Indeed, he that looks upon her will no longer remain indifferent even to the least sin, but will under her protection and by her assistance fight against all spiritual enemies and gain the crown of eternal glory. Or should he perhaps fear this combat on account of his own frailty and weakness? Mary is the "Virgin most powerful," and with her help victory is certain. Or should he hesitate to call upon her on account of former sins and vices? Let him remember: Mary is the "Mother of mercy." As a mother will receive with open arms her wayward child now returning to ask her pardon, so will Mary receive the greatest sinner, if he entertain an earnest desire of true repentance and conversion. — Therefore, the best manner of venerating Mary is: to avoid all sins, and to practise virtue.

EXAMPLE.

The parents of St. Justina were still heathens,

when she confessed her belief in Christ Jesus, and after a short time converted her parents. She was extraordinarily beautiful. This was especially noticed by a young heathen who, burning with shameful lust, sought to gain her to himself by magic agency. Justina was seriously tempted; she was troubled by such great temptations, that all resistance appeared impossible. Already she believed the loss of virtue and fall into sin unavoidable. In this extreme danger she lifted her eyes to heaven and amid tears she implored Mary's assistance and protection. This good Mother heard her prayer; for at once the spirits of darkness and lust, which assailed her innocent soul, fled. She also obtained upon Mary's intercession the grace of persevering and perfect chastity unto the end of her life. Moreover she obtained the conversion of Cyprian, who sought to cast Justina into destruction, and both suffered the death of holy martyrs in the year 304.

PRAYER.

Mary, immaculate Virgin and Mother of the Most High, do not reject me, sin-laden creature, from thee. Behold me prostrate upon my knees beseeching thee to be a merciful Mother to me. Assist me in my battles against sin; infuse into my heart ever more the sentiments of thy immaculate heart, that I may perceive my misery and in true contrition hate, despise, bewail and avoid

nothing more in this world than sin. Obtain for me also, O powerful Virgin, the grace of perseverance in the practice of all necessary virtues. Grant me thy assistance to avoid all sins, and to practise all virtues. Amen.

FOURTH DAY OF MAY.

HOW SHALL WE VENERATE MARY?

If there exists in our hearts a great horror of sin, if we are really penetrated by the knowledge of the misfortune and ruin, arising from sin, we shall not only seek to free ourselves from it and to avoid it, but we will also endeavor to oppose its ravages, to preserve others from its ruin, or deliver them whenever it be possible. This is the zeal for souls—another attribute of a good servant of Mary. Mary was filled with this zeal; it was the impulse of her life. Her prayer in the solitude of Nazareth, her labors and sufferings for our Saviour, her sacrifice in the temple and upon Golgotha, as also her mediatorial office at the throne of her Divine Son in heaven: all this had no other end than the glory of God in saving souls. "Mary," remarks Cardinal Hugo, "is the great mediatrix who regains peace from God for the enemies, and obtains salvation for the lost, pardon for the sinners and mercy for the despairing." How can any one looking into her heart that is burning with such Christian zeal, remain indifferent to sin even in

others, indifferent to the eternal salvation or condemnation of his fellow-men?

That indeed is a very great honor that we can pay Mary, if filled with ardent zeal for souls, we lead human beings to her Divine Son. By it Mary receives new children, new servants who will venerate her in truth and in works; and thus with the name of Jesus, her name also will be magnified and hallowed. Could it be possible that we love Mary and be indifferent as to whether others love and venerate her or not? Surely not. It must grieve us, therefore, if we look about ourselves and see how many millions still rest in the darkness of heathenism and in the abominations of idolatry; how many Christians know Christ but love him not, nor his Mother; how many Christians lead a life more creditable to a heathen; how many are weak in faith, necessarily exposed to seduction, in constant danger of losing innocence and purity of heart; how many by their vices walk toward inevitable destruction, unless some friendly hand support them? And if we consider furthermore the consequence of this perversion and sinful life, we find multitudes carrying the oppressive burdens of poverty, misery, sickness, and the like; numbers in agony fighting the last and decisive combat for eternity. Then, also, the poor souls in purgatory crying pitifully and with uplifted hands to us to help them. Behold, what a vast field for the practice

of zeal for the salvation of souls, for the imitation of the love-glowing heart of Mary, for the attainment of her favor and pleasure.

Look upon Mary. Is she not called the "Mother of mercy," and "Our hope?" "Comfort of the afflicted,"—"the refuge of sinners,"—"the help of Christians?" And why all this? Because her mercy, next to that of God, is boundless and applied all to mankind; because she imparts hope to us, after having fallen into sin, by her mighty intercession; because she, having endured the world's miseries, will comfort the afflicted; because she, knowing the dreadful punishment, will receive the truly penitent sinner, lead him to and reconcile him with God; because she will help all that have recourse to and implore her maternal assistance. O, how beautifully does St. Bernard say: "Remember, Mary, tenderest-hearted Virgin, how the ear has never heard that he who had recourse to thee, implored thy help and sought thy prayers, was forsaken by thee!" O, would that our hearts were filled like Mary's with such ardent zeal for souls; would that they beat more warmly to our fellowmen! How manifold opportunities would present themselves, in which we could imitate Mary's example in preserving our neighbor against or rescuing him from the misery and ruin of sin. And should neither command nor removal from danger, nor fraternal admonition and correction be possible,

then in all cases one means still is left—namely: prayer. By our prayers we may accomplish much; we may reach over land and sea into most distant heathen countries, or into the glittering abodes of sins, vices, and crimes; we may penetrate even the closed portals of the land of suffering—purgatory. In prayer we are rich and able to give daily alms, like Mary interceding for us daily and hourly, and may thus merit mercy at the hands of our rigorous Judge, and the thanks of the Mother of mercy.

Finally, Christian souls, you venerate Mary by placing great confidence in her. Of all the servants of Mary St Bernard was the greatest. His heart glowed in love and childlike trust to Mary; and millions of others since then have been inflamed by it. What he has prayed: "Remember, O tenderest-hearted Virgin"—the celebrated Memorare, is still recited by the entire Catholic community, and as it did then, still does increase and strengthen confidence in Mary. And numbers recite it through their own private experience. They have felt its strength in need and adversity, and have received at all times, though perhaps not all, surely that which was serviceable to them, proving in their own case that their trust in Mary was not in vain.

The foundation of this confidence in Mary has already been mentioned; it lies in her dignity as Mother of God and as Mother of mankind. As

Mother of God she possesses exceedingly great power, so that she is able to accomplish more than all saints. "Thou, O Lady," says St. Anselm, "art more exalted than the patriarchs, the martyrs, the confessors, the virgins . . . . and, therefore, thou alone and without them art able to do all that they can only with thee." And St. Alphonsus Liguori remarks: "The Son is omnipotent by His nature, the Mother by grace, that is: she receives all by her prayer whatsoever she demands." As Mother of mankind, Mary has enclosed each of us in her tender loving heart, and knows no greater joy than to benefit us.

Let us then cast aside all diffidence; it is offensive to her. All is promised to hope; let us, therefore, expect all through Mary. In this point let us be like children. A child seeing danger will run to its mother; at her side it feels safe when it fears punishment from the father, or bears it patiently, if it cannot be warded off; in all its trifling troubles and afflictions or in joy, it is the mother from whom it expects sympathy, to her it confides all, and is confident of being heard and understood. Thus has it been ordained by God, in order that weakness be not entirely abandoned, and the bonds uniting mother and child, be drawn the more firmly. If such, then, be the order of nature, what may be said of grace? If an earthly mother, though imperfect and often selfish, proves such

love, what must be said of Mary's love to us,—Mary who is full of grace, in whose heart not a spark of self-interest was to be found on earth, whilst now in heaven it burns with such a love to us, exceeded only by the love of God?

True it is, God loves us with an infinite love; yet this will not render Mary's love superfluous. God in His unrelenting justice must at times turn us off, when we appear before Him in a sinful and punishable state; but if Mary leads us to Him she will by her meritorious sanctity cover our culpability. This she has merited by suffering those dreadful pains during our Saviour's life on earth; by this she has gained super-abundant treasures for us, her children. Away, then, with all diffidence. Let us approach Mary, the Mother of mercy, and our dear Mother, with unbounded confidence. "Thou hast received an indomitable power, in order that the multitude of sins may not outweigh thy kindness. Nothing can resist thy power; for the Creator considers thy honor His own honor. And the Son rejoices to honor thee and grants all thy prayers, thus to pay off, as it were, His debts to thee. "Thus St. George of Nicomedia addressed the blessed Virgin. And St. Bonaventure remarks: "What hast thou to fear, my soul? The affair of thy salvation is not lost; for the sentence is in the hands of thy brother and thy mother." What words of encouragement!

Let us, then, often repeat the words of our holy Church: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities; but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin."

EXAMPLE.

As a child St. Stanislaus Kostka, was noted for his great love to Mary. When speaking of her whom he so tenderly loved, he would move his hearers to love Mary. He never performed any work without having first asked Mary's blessing and assistance. When reciting the Office, the rosary or other prayers, he spoke with such earnestness and expression, as if he were addressing Mary, face to face. When hearing the Salve Regina sung, his soul was so touched that his countenance reflected his interior feelings. Visiting one day, in company with a Reverend Father of the Society of Jesus, an image of the blessed Virgin, he was asked by the father how much he loved Mary? "My father," he replied, "what more can I say: she is my Mother!" And with such gentle voice and flaming ardor did Stanislaus speak these words, that he appeared more like an angel announcing his love of Mary. This great love was returned by Mary. As he desired and often prayed, Mary took him to herself on the feast of her Assumption, 1568.

PRAYER.

No, my good Mother, I will not mistrust thee. I will call upon thee every day; and my prayer shall not be mere words of the lips. I will have recourse to thee with childlike confidence in all my necessities. Hear my prayers in behalf of my soul and the souls of my fellow-men. Do not despise my supplication, for thou art my Mother. Do thou intercede for me at the throne of my judge, for thou art His Mother. Lead thou me with maternal care over the thorny paths of this earthly life into the glory of heaven. Amen.

FIFTH DAY OF MAY.

HOW DO WE VENERATE MARY BY THE ROSARY?

"Thou knowest, my beloved son," the blessed Virgin said to St. Dominic, "What means God has employed to redeem the human race. The first was the salutation brought to me by the Angel Gabriel; then followed the gracious nativity and the holy life of Jesus Christ; then His bitter passion and death; finally His glorious resurrection and ascension. And by this the world was redeemed and reopened. These mysteries of the life and passion of Christ, united with the Angelic salutation and the Lord's prayer, are my rosary." And this rosary is to the present day one of the most universally practised devotions in honor of Mary, the blessed Mother of God. There is hardly another devotion so universal, so beneficial, so acceptable to our dear Mother. Its meaning is already contained in its name.

"Mystical rose"—thus our church calls the virginal Mother of God. The rose is the queen of flowers above all, on account of her beautiful color —red,—the perfection of colors, the color of fire and of blood—the true sign of life. This blood

and fire color is the symbol of holy love, which like a flower consumes the heart as a holocaust in the service of God. The rose is also the queen of flowers, on account of her fulness of sweet odor, which distinguishes itself by strength and mildness from all odors. This odor is, according to holy Scriptures, a symbol of prayer that should arise from the heart of man like odor from the flower-cup or thurible to heaven, and gladden the heart of God. But above all human hearts, the heart of Mary was an altar dedicated to God, upon which the flames of love were never extinguished; it was the flower-cup, the golden vessel of devotion, out of which the odor, the incense of prayer continually ascended to God, and descended again upon the earth in showers of graces. Hence, Mary is called the "mystical rose,"—that is: the soul always engaged in prayer.

With Mary's prayer, our prayer should be inflamed, with Mary's prayer our prayer should be united; the blessed mother-rose should propagate in an undecaying wreath of daughter-roses; for like her every christian soul should be a rose of piety acceptable to God and emitting the fragrant odor of devotion. Although we found our prayers upon the commands and merits of our blessed Redeemer, we are still assisted by the example and intercession of Mary, who alone among all human beings possesses in a most eminent degree: sanctity, grace

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and the Holy Ghost, who teaches to pray right. From this arose the custom that we hardly ever recite the Lord's prayer without turning by an "Hail, Mary!" to the mystical rose—our model in prayer; and from this belief, from this need of help from her the rosary grew forth,—that beautiful plant in the garden of piety, whose root is the profession of faith,—the Apostles' Creed, whose stem is the Lord's Prayer, whose branches are the angelic salutations—or Hail, Mary. Behold, how excellent this form of prayer is; should Mary not feel honored by it?

The rosary—what an excellent form of prayer? Look at its component parts. It begins with the sign of the cross—the cruel instrument of our Saviour's death, but at the same time, the banner of victory over sin, death and hell, the pledge of our renewed friendship with God. Of it St. Ambrose says: "The cross is the banner of salvation, the triumph of Christ, the palm of eternal life." And the blessed Thomas a Kempis remarks: "In the cross is salvation; in the cross is life; in the cross is protection from enemies, ... In the cross is height of virtue, in the cross is perfection of sanctity . . . . Take up, therefore, thy cross and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting." —Next follows the Apostles' Creed. Here we make a profession of faith, without which faith we shall not be acceptable to God, but as he declared: shall

be condemned. And how pleasing must its recital be to Mary? It recalls what the Omnipotent God has done for mankind, not through necessity, but through love; it recalls the joyful mysteries of the incarnation and birth of our Saviour; it mentions His bitter passion and death; it speaks of His glorious resurrection and ascension, and what He has ordained for man's spiritual welfare. Now, Mary is our Mother; shall she not be honored by the profession and belief of all this with which she was closely connected?

Then we praise the most blessed Trinity, as it was in the beginning, now, and shall be forever. Shall Mary whose love to God was indescribable, not join in our praise, when we recite the rosary and feel honored in the person of Jesus Christ, her Divine Son?

Hereupon we recite the Lord's prayer.—Remember: not a human being, not an angel, but God himself has taught it, Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary. How acceptable must this prayer be to Mary! How cheerful to her maternal heart, when we repeat the self-same words of her beloved Son! How gladly will she present our petitions contained in this prayer to her Son! "Brethren," says therefore St. Cyprian, "Brethren, let us pray as the Master, God himself, has taught. That is an amiable and confidential prayer, when we petition God in the words He has taught us, when Christ's prayer ascends to him."

And now follows the "Hail, Mary." The whole rosary consists of one hundred and fifty Hail, Mary's; divided into fifteen decades, of which, however, but five are generally said, together with a mystery for each decade. And this prayer is especially devoted to the blessed Mother of God; by it we make a wreath of roses for the glorious Virgin. "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." Such is the salutation sent by Most High God to Mary through the ministry of an angel. Behold the great honor! And now we repeat the same words so often. How pleasing to us is a friend's greeting? What must be the feelings of Mary, when we greet her so often with this sublime, angelic salutation? Remember how she rewards this salutation. St. Bonaventure says: "The blessed Virgin gladly salutes us in return with nothing but consolations and benefits, if we frequently salute her with this prayer."

But, Christian souls, bear in mind, roses are of different colors. So also the roses that we place in the wreath for the blessed Virgin in her rosary. Whiter and more dazzling than the Alpine snow, in the brilliant mid-day sun, are the first five roses —the five joyful mysteries;—they are the roses of joy. There is Mary—that golden vessel of devotion, praying for the promised Messiah. And behold, the angel enters and salutes her in the name of the most holy Trinity, and brings her the cheerful tid-

ings that she, among the millions of her sex, was found worthy and chosen to be the Mother of the Redeemer. What joy to this pure Virgin!—She visits her cousin Elizabeth, and is saluted: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." What joy!—There in Bethlehem's poor stable she brings forth the promised Saviour of the world; she caresses Him; she presses Him to her virginal bosom; she is now the Mother of God. What indescribable joy!—Mary makes an offering, and indeed the most acceptable offering to God of her Divine Son. What joy!—Mary lost her Divine Son, and seeking Him with an afflicted heart, found Him after three days in the temple. What joy! Could we, indeed, honor Mary more than by oft recalling these most joyful and gracious events of her life?

But alas! not all roses are beautiful white; there are roses red, bloody red, signifying sufferings and blood, as also the love from which they proceed. The holy fathers teach that Mary suffered spiritually what Christ suffered corporally. And are not a child's sufferings also shared by the mother? What, then, must Mary have endured during Christ's agony in the garden of Gethsemane? what during the bloody scourging and crowning with thorns? what when she beheld Him dragging His heavy cross to Calvary and there nailed upon it? O what pains for this tender Mother! Indeed these are bloody

roses in her rosary,—these sorrowful mysteries, and painful occurrences during her life on earth.

But as everything on earth is of short duration, so also these sufferings. Soon the bloody roses are changed into bright golden yellow,—into the glorious mysteries of the resurrection and ascension of her Divine Son, of the coming of the Holy Ghost, of her assumption into heaven and her crowning as Queen of heaven. Beautiful, indeed, is the rosary! Beautiful the white roses of the joyful mysteries; sad but loving the red roses of the sorrowful mysteries; desirable the golden yellow roses of the glorious mysteries. Can we by prayer honor Mary more than by reciting the rosary? No, never. Let us, then, recite often the rosary, daily, if possible.

EXAMPLE.

There are certainly few saints who paid greater homage to Mary, the heavenly Queen, and loved her more tenderly than did St. Theresa. As a child already Theresa honored and loved the blessed Virgin as much as was in the power of an human heart. When in her twelfth year of age she had been deprived by death of her pious mother, she sorely afflicted prostrated herself before an image of Mary, and begged most supplicantly and amid tears that Mary would deign to be her Mother. When she got possession of a picture of the Mother of

God, it was pleasant to hear, in what sweet and love-breathing words she addressed Mary. She loved the rosary exceedingly, recited it gladly and meditated upon its mysteries. To please the ever blessed Virgin she entered a convent and did a very great amount of good. As Theresa chose Mary to be her Mother, so she remained her faithful child until death.

PRAYER.

It shall ever be to me, O mystical rose! a delightful occupation, if I can venerate thee by the holy rosary. As a reward I only ask this in return: Obtain for me by thy mighty intercession at the throne of the most gracious God, this grace, that I may always endeavor more firmly to imitate what I consider and revere in thy rosary, and to become more worthy of thee as thy honor and thy crown. Amen.

SIXTH DAY OF MAY.

HOW DO WE VENERATE MARY BY THE ROSARY?

There is no doubt, Christian souls, that the devotion of the rosary is most excellent, that it is a venerable form of prayer, and that it bestows great honor upon Mary, the blessed Mother of God, and our dear Mother. But its delightful fruits,—the graces and the indulgences attached to this devotion, are certainly intended only for those that recite it in the proper manner,—namely, with reverence, devotion and consideration. What St. Jerome says of the Psalter, also holds good of the rosary: "It is better to recite but seven psalms with a pure and devout heart, than the whole Psalter in haste and distraction."

"Before prayer," says the wise man, "prepare thy soul, and be not as a man that tempteth God." (Eccli. 18. 23.) This preparation for the rosary consists in the collection of one's thoughts, and in the zeal for Mary's honor; furthermore in the purification of the heart by true contrition; and finally in forming a good intention. Hence it is necessary that the wandering thoughts be collected and concentrated upon what one is about to do, placing

one's self in the presence of God, and encouraging one's self to praise the heavenly Mother.

Next, cast a glance upon the pitiful state of the soul stained by so many transgressions and sins, and make an act of contrition, that you cannot appear more acceptable before God and the most pure Virgin. And finally, form a particular intention; for the intention in our works decides all. Let it generally be an intercessary prayer, a spiritual alms by offering it for your own soul's welfare and, as far as beneficial, for your temporal welfare, if necessary, or for any that are in need of it.

But like all other prayers, the rosary must be recited with reverence, attention and devotion. Let not the words of Christ to the Jews have reference to you: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." No; show your reverence, if there be any in your heart, by your exterior posture in and during prayer. Manifest your attention by reflecting upon the words of prayer, or upon the mysteries, or by considering the persons to whom you pray — your heavenly Father, your blessed Saviour in the most holy Eucharist, or your dear Mother in her celestial glory. And finally be devout; let your heart participate in your prayer. Look upon a business man. He considers the receipts and expenses, he divides time and labor to meet with success, his heart and mind are fixed upon his business transactions.

And such is the conduct of all connected with worldly affairs. Now, if temporal matters can be studied and considered, why not also religious, spiritual affairs? In the devotion of the rosary and in its mysteries, attractive and sublime subjects of consideration are found; should our hearts remain cold or indifferent thereat?—In it we find great treasures, yea, the supreme Good, should not our hearts be seized by a holy desire of obtaining all? And these desires and sentiments of your hearts, can you not retain them in the recesses of your devout heart or express them in your prayer? "At prayer the voice of the heart must be heard more than that of the lips," says St. Bonaventure; and St. Augustine remarks: "What else is prayer than raising the soul from earthly to heavenly things, seeking what is above, longing for what is yet invisible to us." And finally, close your devotion by a firm, good resolution. Thank God and His blessed Mother Mary for their assistance in your prayer, and ask their grace in practising the resolutions you have formed.

Such, then, are the conditions of prayer in general, should it be heard. And the same conditions are required for the recital of the rosary—that excellent, venerable and beneficial devotion to the blessed Mother Mary, should we desire to reap the fruits thereof in a most bountiful measure. And what fruits are these?

You know the end of your creation, Christian souls,—to love and serve God now and to be with Him forever hereafter. But you also know that at times it is very difficult to work in reaching this end; of yourselves, as of yourselves, you can do no good, for your heart is prone to evil. Hence the need of supernatural assistance, of divine grace. And now the first fruit of the rosary is this divine grace. For if you recite the holy rosary with devotion and attention, as also with a contrite and pure heart, your heart will become more tranquil; your thoughts will be directed more to God; you will be warned against much evil and animated to do good; you will be filled with holy sentiments and resolutions. This all, however, is the working of divine grace. Again reflecting upon the mysteries, will you not partake of Mary's happiness in the joyful occurrences of her life? Will you not feel compassion with the afflicted Mother of God, when considering those sorrowful mysteries of her Divine Son's passion and death, and will you not then resolve never more to renew these sufferings by mortal sin? Will you not also glorify the victorious Redeemer, and look up to heaven where He now reigns, and where His blessed Mother dispenses His graces, with an ardent longing of soon entering into this blissful abode? No doubt, such thoughts will enter your minds, such sentiments will occupy your hearts. And behold, this

is the work of divine grace that you have drawn down upon yourselves by prayer. "The grace is God who worketh in the soul," remarks Fenelon.

The second fruit of the rosary-devotion is the very powerful intercession of Mary, who prays for us now and in the hour of our death. And, indeed, how necessary is this intercession? How prone are we to evil? How averse often to good? How frequently do we sin by thought, word, deed and omission? And for all this how often have we deserved to be rejected and abandoned by God? And in that last and decisive hour of death, in that hour of agony, when our whole life with its misdeeds, and but little good, lies open before us, when Satan pictures in most hideous colors our sins to our minds, when the whole hell rises up against us in its last attempt to destroy us, when the thought of the judgment and its irrevocable sentence fills us with fear and trembling, when the portals of eternity open unto us,—in that dreaded but certain hour of death how necessary, how desirous is the intercession of Mary, the Virgin most powerful? Indeed she will favor us with her intercession at the throne of grace and mercy, if we do not fail to ask; she will protect us under her maternal mantle, if we frequently ask her protection. And behold, how often do we call upon her in the holy rosary: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and in the hour of our death?" Will

Mary listen to our prayers? Doubt not; for St. Bernard says: "Remember, tenderest-hearted Virgin, that it has never been heard, that he who ran to thee for refuge, implored thy help and sought thy prayers, was forsaken by thee." And St. Jerome writes: "To the dying Mary sends her help; yea, she herself comes to their assistance in the hour of their departure into eternity."

Again, by the rosary-devotion, we partake of universal prayers; since others pray for us and we pray for them. We do not say: "My Father,—give me my daily bread,—lead me not into temptation,—holy Mary, pray for me;" but we say: "Our Father,—give us,—lead us not,—pray for us," and thus we share an universal prayer. And how great is this prayer to us? When St. Paul departed from any congregation he always recommended himself to the prayers of the faithful. "Brethren, pray for us," (I. Thess. 5. 25.) he says; and again: "I desire, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all men, ... for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." (I. Tim. 2. 1-3.) Christ Jesus Himself tells us to pray for one another, even for our enemies. And in what form of prayer is this charitable obligation performed more than in the rosary? Hence St. Francis of Sales encourages us to pray for one another, saying: "Prayer which we recite for others, increases our merits unto retribu-

tion of grace, not only in this life but also to the glory of eternal life."

And finally, we can make of the rosary-devotion a suffrage for the poor souls in purgatory. What immense benefit! Remember that these poor souls are certain of the happiness of heaven; but as yet they are held captive in purgatory and suffer, until the least stain of their debt of sin is wiped away, or until sufficient penance by these sufferings satisfies the justice of God. Remember too that among these poor souls are perhaps your beloved parents or brothers and sisters, your devoted friends and relatives, your corporal or spiritual benefactors. These you can assist by the devotion of the rosary, which the Church has endowed with so many indulgences that may be applied to the poor souls. And Mary will hear your prayer for them; for she herself revealed to St. Bridget: "I am the Mother of all poor souls in purgatory; for all sufferings which they have deserved for sins committed in life, are more or less alleviated at all hours by my intercession."

EXAMPLE.

In her childhood already St. Genevieve was devoted with all her heart to the ever blessed Virgin Mary. Her mother who disliked her frequent visits to the churches and much prayer, struck her in the face at one time, wherefore she immediately be-

came blind. But Genevieve praying most ardently for her, obtained after two days for her the faculty of sight. As a virgin Genevieve led a secluded life of prayer and of penance. She partook of nourishment but twice a week; wine she never drank. Her life was a continual prayer. Saturdays and vigils of the feasts of Mary she devoted particularly to prayer. On one occasion when going to church at night with a burning candle, the evil spirit extinguished it; but she only touched it with her finger and it burned brightly at once. Upon her prayer a dead boy who assisted her in venerating Mary, returned to life. She died as a holy servant of God and Mary in the year 512.

PRAYER.

May my prayer to thee, O holy Mary, never become anything ordinary, but let it ever be important and reverential; then shall it not be vain prayer of the lips, but powerful, in order to reap thereby beautiful fruits. It will merit for me God's mercy, it will render me worthy of thy protection, it will be of indescribable benefit to me, to my fellow-men and to the poor souls, for whom I offer it. Amen.

SEVENTH DAY OF MAY.

THE CROSS ON THE ROSARY.

The cross, Christian souls, is the symbol of the Christian's faith in the Triune God; for the Gospel truths that he professes are nothing but the doctrine of the cross; and a sincere Christian is not ashamed of the gospel, as St. Paul confesses of himself. Hence we, as Catholic Christians, begin all our devotional exercises by the sign of the cross, which should not be to us a scandal, as it was to the Jews, or a folly, as to the heathens. What the uniform is to a soldier, that the sign of the cross is to us. By the uniform we can tell to what regiment a soldier belongs, by the sign of the cross we can tell what religion a man professes.

"Whosoever confesses me before men, him also will I confess before my heavenly Father," says Christ. What indeed, can faith profit us, if He who is our only mediator, confess us not before His heavenly Father? Or if we prove not this faith by our actions? Then it is a dead faith. We must confess Him by word and action, and then will He acknowledge us as His own. And this profession may easily be made by the sign of the cross, which

St. Augustin calls a compendium of our faith. And, indeed, do we not profess faith in the Triune God by saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost?" We do not say: In the names, but: In the name, thus referring to the One God, in three divine persons. Do we not admit by leading our hand from the forehead to the breast, the infinite mercy of the blessed Trinity descending from on high, and creating, redeeming and sanctifying us? And by leading the hand from left to right, thus completing the sign of the cross, do we not show how by the death of the Saviour upon it, we have been transferred from the left,—from among sinners, to the right among the just? Do we not acknowledge by this sign of the cross all that the merciful Saviour has done to redeem us? Indeed, it is a strong profession of faith.

Again, Christ Jesus tells us: "Whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you." But to pray in the name of Jesus means to pray with an humble, resigned and contrite heart, trusting in the merits of the blessed Redeemer. All this, however, we can learn best in the cross. Humility, —for the cross was the wood of ignominy; resignation into the will of God,—for the cross was an altar of suffering; contrition,—for the cross was the instrument of torture made by our sins; confidence,—for the cross is sanctified by the blood of

the innocent Abel, which cries uninterruptedly to heaven for pardon and mercy for us sinners. Thus we learn from the cross the conditions of a good prayer. We arm ourselves with the cross against the wrath of the offended God. How should we who are covered with the nauseous leprosy of sins and vices, dare to appear before the holy countenance of God? But we adorn ourselves with the cross of His beloved Son, and we are rendered acceptable to Him; with it we shall triumph over His justice, and our prayers shall be heard. Satan himself is driven to flight by it; he cannot injure our devotion, if our lips and minds and hearts are sealed with the cross. He may trouble, disturb and assail us, but he cannot injure us.

"God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." And now should He who has given us His Son, not have given us all in Him? And this the cross preaches to us. The cross teaches the love of a father as God alone could bear; it teaches the love of a brother who suffered a most cruel death for us. Should not, then, the cross made in the beginning of our prayers render it acceptable to the love of God? "Let us with a joyful heart carry about the cross of Christ," says St. Chrysostom; "for all that is serviceable to our salvation, is accomplished by it; if we are born again the cross is there; if we are

nourished with the holy food, if we receive holy orders, always and everywhere, this monument of victory is at our side. Therefore, let us zealously raise it in our homes, on the walls and in the windows, on the forehead as well as in the heart."

Moreover, Christian souls, the sign of the cross has been used as a blessing from the earliest centuries of the Church down to the present moment. Tertullian, writing toward the end of the second century, says that the custom of blessing one's self with the sign of the cross is old, and was observed in his time already so sacredly, as if it rested upon divine command. And no wonder, if we consider the benefits of this blessing. The sign of the cross was honored not only because it represents to us the most important truths of faith and of morality, but also because a certain inherent power was ascribed to it. To this confiding use of the cross is naturally attached a certain appropriation of that protection and blessing, that had their origin in the sacrifice of the cross. Hence the Church ordains that this sign be used in all blessings and unctions. But should this sign manifest its power, it is necessary that with the exterior sign faith and confidence be united.

The power of the cross reveals itself above all in the combat with Satan; for it is the weapon by which he is most easily conquered. To this St. Cyril testifies in the words: "As the dog fears the

rod with which he had been struck, so does the evil spirit become terrified, when he sees the sign of the cross made; for he is reminded by it of the wood of that cross by which Christ vanquished him." By the cross Jesus Christ destroyed sin, conquered Satan, and gained indescribable graces for us; should then the cross not possess strength to assist us in gaining the victory over sin and Satan?—The cross has been sanctified by the sacred blood of Jesus, the Son of God; should it not have strength to sanctify us? "The cross of Christ," says St. Augustin, "contains wonderful power; the mere mention of it drives our invisible enemies to flight, strengthens us against their attacks, and protects us against their snares." Hence the saints of God have made such frequent use of the sign of the cross against all attacks of Satan.

Its strength is also manifest against the temptations of the flesh. And how rebellious at times does our flesh become? How severe the temptations it causes? And how easy to yield? This is proved in the lives of many saints who doing austere penance, leading a mortified life, have still been tempted most terribly by their own flesh, thus showing the truth of St. Paul's words, that our own flesh is our own greatest enemy. Yet they made use of the sign of the cross and conquered. Hence, St. Chrysostom also remarks: "Not only to the spirits of the infernal abyss is the cross terrible;

but also the perverted inclinations, the unbridled passions, the corrupt desires fall, as if swooning, before the sign of the cross."

Yea, the sign of the cross is help in all kinds of misfortune and sufferings. This the saints have experienced. St. Albin healed the blind by the sign of the cross; St. Sabianus blessed himself and his monks, who were working in a place infested by venomous serpents and vipers, and were not bitten; St. Benedict made the cross over a cup of wine and it bursted, because it had been poisoned. And like these, numbers of examples could be adduced to prove the great power of the sign of the cross. Therefore St. Augustin often said: "Christ died upon the cross for me; this is sweet comfort for me in my tribulation and suffering." Verily, the cross of Christ is to us the power of God, as St. Paul says, a power which Christ, the Son of God, has imparted by His Passion upon it, and by His most sacred blood which stained it.

But why is the cross at the head of the rosary,—a devotion sacred to the Mother of God? Whatsoever is glory to a child, does not also its mother partake of it? And now, behold, the cross is the profession of our faith in Christ Jesus, who is God himself, and the Divine Son of Mary: are they not honored by making the sign of the cross? Again, the cross is indeed the instrument of torture, but it is also the weapon by which Mary's Divine Son

conquered sin, death and hell, it is the trophy of victory of the Saviour; will not the remembrance of this victory and the sight of the cross gladden the heart of Mary? For this reason the cross is placed at the head of the rosary, that Mary who shared its ignominy, sorrow and sufferings, should also enjoy its honor and glory. But remember, you cannot honor Mary, if you walk as enemies of the cross; you can never honor her, if you follow not the foot-steps of her cross-bearing Son. Hence, should Mary be your compassionate Mother, carry your cross, honor Christ's cross, and thus you will confer honor upon her.

EXAMPLE.

St. Clare of the cross, so called, because the instruments of Christ's sufferings had been imprinted in her heart, was a zealous servant of God and His glorious Mother Mary. She often lay prostrate before the crucifix and meditated upon the bitter Passion of Jesus Christ and the sufferings of His Mother. The practise of prayer, of virtues and of mortification was her life. When after the death of her mother she had been chosen superioress she continued to sanctify not only herself, but also her sisters in religion. She became absorbed more and more in the Passion of Christ and in it inflamed her heart to a glowing love of her Saviour. Once

the blessed Saviour appeared to her and said: "For a long time I have considered, what I should give thee to thy soul's comfort; behold, I will give thee this cross, which cannot be erected in a better place than in thy heart; give me thy heart that thou mayest die upon this cross." And indeed, when after her death her heart was opened, the imprint of all instruments of Christ's Passion was found in it. This has been testified to by three hundred and seventy witnesses.

PRAYER.

Thee, O Mother of the Crucified, will I seek under the cross, where thou didst become my Mother. There teach me to know the sufferings and the love of thy maternal heart; there teach me to love and honor the cross of thy Son. Obtain also, I beseech thee, for me the grace to carry my own cross patiently unto the end. Through thy mediation let all graces that are necessary for me, flow down upon me, that I may hereafter praise my Saviour and thee forever. Amen.

EIGHTH DAY OF MAY.

THE APOSTLES' CREED IN THE ROSARY.

If we desire to honor Mary by the rosary-devotion, we first bless ourselves with the sign of the cross, thus showing that we are followers of Christ, that we glory in the cross of Christ, and thereupon recite the Apostles' Creed. For the mysteries of the rosary should introduce us into the life of God in this world, should show how Mary participated in this life of God, and how we ourselves should take part in it. But faith is the sun without whose light nothing becomes visible to us of God and His working, of Mary and her participation, and of our own destiny. There is a visible, corporal world; upon it we live and its light—the sun, we behold; so also is there a spiritual, invisible world, and its flame of life, its light is faith.

How beautiful is the light of the sun? How majestically does he rise in the far east, spread his brilliant rays down upon us, and set gloriously in the distant west? But what would become of this visible world should the sun disappear from heaven forever? A night would set in so cold, so dark, so fatal that in a short time the world must

be changed into an universal grave. The same also would occur in our souls, in our spirits, should the sun of faith fail us. We have indeed another light in our souls,—that is reason. With it we perceive many things of this world, but it does not reach into the other world. Moreover it is very uncertain and wavering. It cannot lead us in the consideration of this visible world any further than to acknowledge that there must be an Omnipotent, Eternal Being who created all. Any more regarding God, His divine will, our destiny was almost entirely hidden, until God himself has revealed it. He taught our first parents in paradise what was necessary; they believed because God spoke. Their descendants He instructed by His patriarchs and prophets; and because their words were confirmed, they were believed. And finally the Son of God himself came and perfected all revelations by His doctrines—the gospel, which He sealed by His death and glorious resurrection. The testimony of this doctrine we have in the prodigious work of His church which rests upon twelve pillars—His apostles, and which shall emit light and give life unto the end of times—the sun of her one, holy, catholic and apostolic faith.

In this church founded by Christ Jesus, we find Him—"the way, the truth and the life." Whosoever shuns her light, whosoever rejects it intentionally, excludes himself from life everlasting;

for Christ, the Eternal Truth, himself says: "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting,"—a promise to believers; but He also says: "He that doth not believe, is already judged;" and again: "He that believeth not, shall be condemned." In like manner does St. Paul write: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." What plainer language could be desired?

The sun of this world sends forth his rays so clear and penetrating that nothing can resist them. They force their way into remote places, and even the dark night has traces of his light, and the coldest winter some of his warmth. Thus also acts the spiritual sun—faith. It penetrates into most remote countries. The most degenerate nations and tribes have always preserved traces of it, and what they possessed of truth and life came from the inheritance of the first revealed faith. Even in the darkest night of heathenism, the faith of the patriarchs and prophets sent forth light and life. And if in the course of centuries a great number of proud and conceited men have turned their backs to the light of faith, professing to discern all by mere reason, they cannot withdraw themselves entirely from the sun of faith. What little good and noble they possess is owing to the blessings of Christian faith. And this sun God permits to rise daily upon the good and bad. Do we not see it? Do we not confess of receiving light and life

from it? Behold, this profession we make as often as we begin the rosary-devotion in the Apostles' Creed. How venerable is it, how all-embracing its words! Let us cast a glance upon it.

"The symbolum (Apostles' Creed)," says St. Augustine, "is brief in words, but great in mysteries." How true! It contains twelve articles, each of which is ascribed to one of the apostles; and these twelve may be divided into three parts. The first part, consisting of but one article, treats of God in general, of His attributes and of the Trinity; then of the first divine person, God the Father, and of the creation attributed especially to Him. By it we distinguish ourselves from the heathens who believed in many gods. It also represents to us the inestimable grace which God has bestowed upon us by delivering us from the darkness of heathenism and leading us to the knowledge of His divine name. At the same time it reminds us of the great benefit of our creation and of the inexpressible blessing that God is our Father, and we are His children. Indeed, he that pronounces this article of faith attentively, must feel most vividly the sentiments of reverence, love and gratitude to God in the innermost recesses of his heart.

The second part, consisting of six articles, treats of the second divine person—Christ Jesus, the Son of God, and represents Him to us as our Saviour and Judge. It places before our mind's eyes the

great, comforting and gracious truths, that in the course and fulness of time the Son of God assumed human nature, and taught us what we must believe and do, in order to become virtuous and eternally happy; that after innumerable persecutions and sufferings He died upon the cross, in order to redeem us from sin and eternal condemnation; that on the third day he arose gloriously from the dead, and ascended into heaven, to take possession of His glory, to open heaven for us, and to prepare for us a dwelling in those heavenly mansions; and, finally, that He will come again with great power and majesty at the end of times to judge the living and the dead,—all men, virtuous or sinners, without exception. This second part distinguishes us from the Jews who did not believe Christ Jesus to be the Son of God, our Lord and Redeemer, and consequently will not partake of the fruits of redemption. — And who of us could recite this second part of the Apostles' Creed without praising God's infinite mercy; without returning most heartfelt thanks to Jesus, the Son of God, for the great sacrifice of love He has offered for us by His life, passion and death; without renewing the resolution to lead a truly Christian life, to bring forth worthy fruits of penance, in order that on the judgment-day he may be placed to the right among the elect of heaven?

The third part, finally, consists of five articles,

and treats of the third divine person—the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus sent down from heaven to govern His church and to distribute to mankind the fruits of redemption. And since the Holy Ghost sanctifies us by means of the Catholic Church, where He dwells unto the end of times, the article treating of the Church immediately follows, after which the articles of the communion of saints, of the forgiveness of sin, of the resurrection of the body, and of life everlasting. This third part distinguishes us from all those who do not believe what the Catholic Church teaches, and who, if their unbelief be culpable, do not belong to the communion of saints, shall not obtain forgiveness of sins, nor expect a happy resurrection and life everlasting in heaven. And what a blessing have we in the Church? It would profit us nothing that the Father created us and loves us as His children, or that Jesus Christ has pointed out to us by His doctrine and example the way to heaven, and has shed for our redemption the last drop of His heart's blood upon the cross, if we cannot also say in truth: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy, Catholic Church." For those wilfully outside of this church founded by the God-man, there is no salvation. Must we then, when reciting this third part of the Apostles' Creed, not return thanks to God for having called us into His church, for the holy Sacraments dispensed in

this church, for the communion of saints enjoyed in this church, and for the certain salvation, if we desire, to be found in this church?"

Behold, how venerable the Apostles' Creed is! How instructive! Therefore St. Augustin admonishes us in the words: "Forget not to recite daily the Apostles' Creed; when you rise as well as when you retire to rest. Do not neglect to repeat it often, for this repetition is very wholesome." But why is the Apostles' Creed in the rosary-devotion? How do we honor Mary by it?—In holy Scriptures Mary is represented as the woman clothed with the sun. What else but faith is this sun? When this sun was to rise in all his glory, in Christ Jesus, Mary, like rosy morn, announced His coming. She brought to us our salvation, Christ Jesus; and: "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting." She brings and preserves our faith. All unbelievers and infidels are enemies of Mary, whilst all faithful servants of Mary have ever held firm their faith. Thus Mary is honored by professing faith in her Divine Son.

EXAMPLE.

St. Peter of Verona was born of parents belonging to the sect of Manicheeans. In his infancy he already despised this sect, and in his boyhood he attended a Catholic school where he learned the

true faith. Being once asked what he learned he recited the Apostles' Creed. His uncle, provoked at this, commanded him to renounce this faith; but he replied: "Willingly will I obey thee in all just things; but as to my faith I believe in God the Father, the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth." His father's punishment was threatened him; yet he answered: "I honor and fear my father; but I love and fear still more God, the Almighty Father." In this faith he persevered until he was stricken down by heretics, and whilst dying wrote with his own blood the Apostles' Creed.

PRAYER.

In the light of faith we salute thee, O Mary, as the Mother of God. Accept our hearts as a sacrifice; dispel from them all darkness and doubts; fill them with the treasures of faith, and increase this faith, that after this life we may see, not by faith alone, but face to face, thee and thy Divine Son in heaven. Amen.

NINTH DAY OF MAY.

"GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, ETC.," IN THE ROSARY.

What is more becoming, after having considered but briefly in the Apostles' Creed all that the merciful God has done for us by the creation, redemption and sanctification, what is more becoming to us, poor creatures, than to prostrate ourselves in the presence of this Omnipotent, Merciful and Holy God, and say with a most grateful heart: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, now and shall be, world without end. Amen?" And in the course of the rosary-devotion how natural, after having reflected upon the different mysteries, to repeat with the same grateful feeling: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost?" To look up to God and to see what He has done for us, and not to praise and thank Him, what base ingratitude! What a grand opportunity of praising God for His innumerable benefits does the rosary-devotion present?

Behold, Christian souls, it is your duty to praise God. Is He not your Supreme Lord? Is He not your loving Father? "The son honoreth the

father, and the servant his master: if then I be a father, where is my honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 1. 6.) What are the reasons, why God demands to be honored and feared? He has created you, not out of necessity, but by pure love; He has redeemed you for the sake of your immortal souls; He has sanctified you; He has made you a Christian; He has placed you into a certain position in life and has given you reason, memory, will, and strength to fill it; He has blessed you with health, wealth and temporal advantages; He has given you grace and spiritual favors in great abundance. All this—is it not worth our dutiful and heartfelt thanks? Does God himself not say: "Every one that calleth upon My name, I have created him for My glory, I have formed him and made him?" (Isai. 43. 7.) Does not His apostle, St. James, remind you that: "Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights?" (1. 17.) Does not Christ say: "When you shall have done all things, that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which we ought to do?" (Luc. 17. 10.) And now we return thanks for all this by the frequent repetition of the words: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

In these words we unite our praise of the Most High God with that of all angels and saints.

Prayer and thanksgiving to God are also their sweetest, their happiest occupation. Having stood the trial, delivered from all dangers and evils, enjoying indescribable happiness, crowned with eternal glory they no longer have any desires or prayers for themselves; their prayers are intended for us—their suffering or militating brethren and sisters. For themselves they lay down upon the steps of the divine throne that never-ending praise and thanksgiving, mentioned by St. John in the Apocalypse (7. 9–12): "I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues: standing before the throne, and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: And they cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the ancients and the four living creatures: and they fell down before the throne upon their faces and adored God. Saying: Amen. Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor, and power, and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen."

In these words: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," we unite our praise with that of all devout persons who have lived heretofore. There is the royal Psalmist, David. All his psalms overflow with praise and thanks

for the manifold blessings received at the hands of the benevolent God. "I will praise the name of God with a canticle," he exclaims, "and I will magnify Him with praise;" (Ps. 68. 31.) and again: "I will praise Thee, O Lord, my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify Thy name forever. For Thy mercy is great towards me." (Ps. 85. 12.) We join with the wise man who says: "Give glory to God with a good heart. . . . Give to the Most High according to what He hath given to thee." (Eccl. 35. 10.) We join with Zachary in blessing God after the birth of Christ's saintly precursor. We join with Mary, the ever-blessed Virgin. Never did she exclaim: "I am conceived without sin;—I was saluted by the angel as full of grace;—as the blessed among women;—I in preference to all of my sex was chosen to be the Mother of God, the promised Messiah;" no; but referring all honor and glory to God she says: "My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. . . . Because He that is mighty, hath done great things to me: and holy is His name." (Luc. 1. 46.) Angels and saints, and the blessed Mother of the Saviour glorify God; and we may do the same repeatedly in the rosary-devotion,—what honor!

Yea, in the words: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," we unite our words of praise daily with that of millions of our

brethren and sisters upon earth. Many other songs and prayers of praise, venerable and sacred in their origin and usage, rise daily, hourly, from this lowly earth to God's celestial throne. How often is the beautiful: Glory be to God on high (Gloria in Excelsis Deo), the joyful Benedictus —Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the soul-stirring Te Deum Laudamus—Holy Lord, we praise Thy name, how often are these repeated daily all over the world? And yet all this contains, only in mere words, what we say in the rosary by the words: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." The greatest poet, the deepest philosopher, the most devout theologian, cannot express more than what the humblest Christian does in the: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." What honor do we refer to God by these words! What rich treasures do we gather in union with millions of souls! Hence St. Augustine also said: "Thine, O Lord, is all good, Thine is the glory. He, therefore, that seeketh in his works his own glory, is a thief and a robber, because he robs the honor due to Thee, his Lord and God." And St. Bernard remarks: "As there is not a single moment in which we do not enjoy God's benevolence, so should there not be one moment in which we do not think of God and return Him thanks."

But, Christian souls, that these our words:

"Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," be really a praise to the Triune and Most High God, let them be pronounced with the proper sentiments of heart. Above all, pronounce them with humility, with the knowledge of your own lowliness, with feelings of most profound reverence. Or are you perhaps more than Isaias, who hearing the thrice holy to God, considered himself unworthy to unite his praise with that of the angels, until a seraph touched his tongue with a glowing stone? Or are you perhaps more than the cherubim and seraphim, who, with covered faces as it were, not daring to look into the glory and majesty of God, sing His praise eternally? Or are you perhaps even more than the blessed Mother of God, whose soul magnified the Lord and whose spirit rejoiced in God, her Saviour, "because He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid?" Indeed, if they praised God with all humility, we should humble ourselves and give glory to God alone. Like David, we should exclaim: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to Thy name give glory." (Ps. 113.)

We should also consider the dignity contained in praising God. Not as a slave or a lowly servant, but as a child of the heavenly Father, as a member of God's great family on earth, and as an heir of heaven, do we join in the celestial praise of

our God. What reverence should this infuse into our hearts? How great is our dignity? Our praise should also be noticed in all our endeavors and works, and then God is glorified by us whom He has made for His honor. This St. Chrysostom explains very clearly in the words: "Our eyes can praise God, when they cast no immodest looks; —our ears, when they listen not to impure or sinful talk;—our tongues, when they sing God's praise; —our minds, when they engage themselves with sincerity and truth, not with deception;—our feet, when they follow virtues, and not vices;—our hands, when they do no injury, but give alms and defend and protect innocence." Thus we praise God by our actions.

But why are these words used in the rosary? Is Mary honored thereby? If a father, or a son, or a bridegroom are honored and praised, does not the mother, or daughter, or spouse also partake to a certain extent of this honor and praise? Indeed she does. Hence, when saying: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," the ever blessed Virgin, Mary, is praised; for she is the beloved daughter of the heavenly Father, she is the blessed Mother of Jesus, the Son of God, she is the chosen spouse of the Holy Ghost; and therefore, when praising the most blessed Trinity, we also praise Mary, our dear and gracious Mother.

EXAMPLE.

St. Ignatius was born at Loyala, in Spain, in the year 1491. He served his king as a courtier and soldier till his thirtieth year. At that age, being laid low by a wound, he received the call of divine grace to leave the world and follow Jesus Christ. He gave himself up entire, unreserved, and resigned to the love and glory of God. He gathered around himself companions, who, together, made a vow to work for the glory of God in the salvation of souls, and placed themselves under strict obedience to the vicar of Christ—the Pope. Their motto was and is to this day: "Ad majorem Dei gloriam—To the greater glory of God." In this work—the zeal for God's glory, St. Ignatius lived and died.

PRAYER.

To thee, O blessed Virgin Mary, we have recourse. Offer our praise and thanksgiving to the Triune God, for all He has deigned to confer upon us; and by thy intercession obtain for us the grace, that our souls magnify God, and our spirits rejoice in our Saviour, now and forever. Amen.

TENTH DAY OF MAY.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE ROSARY.

During many centuries the human race devoted itself in manifold manners to the exercise of prayer. But after all it was, in many instances, useless, fruitless labor to them. At last a disciple beheld our Lord, in a little distance praying with such warmth, with such holy fervor, that overcome by the ardent desire to pray in like manner, he begged most supplicantly that Jesus should teach him how to pray. "Lord," he says, "Lord, teach us to pray." (Luc. 11.) And lovingly Jesus turned to His disciples and said: "When you are praying, speak not much as the heathens. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard. . . . Thus therefore shall you pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. Amen." O truly wonderful, celestial prayer! Since it flowed from the sacred lips of Jesus, it

has been repeated by millions and millions of men, and all must confess that there is no prayer richer in blessings, more profound in mysteries, more important in its contents than the Lord's prayer. "What wonder," exclaims Tertullian, "God alone understood it; He alone could teach us how to pray to Him."

No doubt, Christian souls, you perceive the excellency of this prayer. Not from human lips, not from angel's tongue, did it proceed, but from the lips of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all mankind. How kind was God to us that He taught us how to pray in spirit and in truth! Indeed, to use the words of St. Augustine, "If thou search every single word of the most excellent prayers, thou wilt find nothing that is not contained in the Lord's prayer."

And if this prayer be so excellent, should it be less powerful? Why should we doubt? Christ plainly says: "Whatsoever you ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you;" how much more may we expect to be heard and to obtain what we ask, if we repeat His own words, His own prayer? God is faithful, what He promises, He will give: and therefore we must confidently hope to obtain what we ask by His prayer. "Let us then pray, brethren, as the Teacher—God himself, has taught us," says St. Cyprian. "That is a gracious and confidential prayer, if we pray to

God in the words, which He himself has taught us,—if Christ's prayer reaches His ear. The Father acknowledges the words of His Son, when we recite this prayer. . . . And if He will give us what we ask of Him in the name of Christ, how much more shall we obtain, if we beg for it in the prayer of Christ?" Indeed this prayer—the very words of Christ, must penetrate the clouds, must bear our spirit into heaven, must unite our souls with God, must open unto us the treasures of divine blessings and graces.

Hence, also, knowing our many wants, corporal and spiritual, and trusting in God's fidelity, benevolence and mercy, we say the Lord's prayer at the beginning of each decade of the holy rosary, in order to place ourselves as poor beggars at the foot of His majestic throne,—thus acknowledging our nothingness, and we repeat it to show our perseverance. Will God fail to hear us? Not, if at all we pray with humility, confidence and perseverance. Yet, in order that our prayer—the words of Christ, pronounced by our unworthy lips, may prove beneficial to us, it would be well to reflect a little more upon this prayer. The Lord's prayer is divided into a short introduction, and seven petitions of praise, of thanksgiving, of supplication and of propitiation.

We begin with the words: "Our Father, who art in heaven." Why? Because God is really

our Father. If we children call him father from whom we have received our life and its necessaries, why should we not call God who has brought us forth out of nothing, who has given us body and soul, and all we have and are, our Father? And more especially now, since we are become His children through Christ Jesus? In the Old Law mankind called God their Lord, themselves they considered servants. But now we call Him by the sweet name "Father," for through His Divine Son we have power to be made sons of God. This St. Paul also tells us in the words: "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba—Father." (Rom. 8. 15.) What honor, what a blessing, that we may call God our Father! Do we, like good children, also love our heavenly Father? Do we revere Him? Do we obey His holy commands?

But why does each of us say: "Our Father," and not "My Father?" Christ Jesus has taught us to say: "Our Father," because God is the Father of all mankind, and that therefore we should pray for one another as brothers and sisters of one family. Not like the Jews, who believed that God only loved them as His chosen people, should we act; but as God extends His fatherly love to all men, we should pray to Him as the Father of us

all. Hence St. Paul says: "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." (Eph. 4. 6.) But if God is the Father of us all, it follows that we must look upon all mankind as the children of the same heavenly Father, and be ever united in the holy bonds of fraternal love; it follows that we must exclude all selfishness, aversion, hatred and enmity, and wish with all our heart well to others as to ourselves,—in other words, we must fulfill Christ's command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

"Our Father, who art in heaven." Thus we pray, though not as if we believed that God is not present everywhere, but to indicate thereby that particular place where God manifests in a particular manner His glory, majesty, power and wisdom, and where the angels and saints behold Him face to face, participating in His glory. These words, moreover, point out whither our prayer should tend—to our Father who is in heaven. They direct our hearts and minds to things celestial, they beget in us, like in good children, an ardent desire to be with our Father who is in heaven.

How excellent this introduction! It is short in words, but very significant in its sense and abounding in love and grace.—"O sweet name, Father!" exclaims St. Augustine; "O name of love! in it lies a certain confidence of obtaining; for before

we pray, we have already been rewarded that we may say: 'Our Father."

"Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name."—"When we pray: Hallowed be Thy name," says St Augustine, "we do not pray as if the name of God were not holy, but that it may be held sacred by all men, that God become so well known to them, that they believe nothing more holy to exist, and fear nothing more than to offend Him." We should, therefore, hallow—hold sacred the name of God in our hearts by paying Him most profound reverence, by desiring most ardently that He become known, adored and loved by all men, and by rejoicing most sincerely that all homage be paid Him,—in heaven and on earth. We should hallow the name of God in words by calling upon Him in devout prayer, by glorifying his divine attributes, by singing His praise, by pronouncing His holy name at all times with the utmost reverence. We should hallow the name of God in all our actions by doing all for the greater honor and glory of God, and by endeavoring to increase God's glory among our fellow-men by our good example. And from all this we shall learn, how sinful it must be to violate God's adorable name by curses and blasphemies; yea, even by vain, useless pronunciation of it, and how scandalous such language is to our fellow-men. Let us, then, always hallow—hold sacred the

name of God, in which name, as St. Paul says, all knees bow in heaven, on earth and under the earth.

And now, Christian souls, let us look upon our model—Mary. By the Lord's prayer we invite Mary to approach and to prostrate herself with us at the foot of her and our Father's throne, and to present with us, and for us, those seven petitions. In such holy company—shall our prayer be left unheard? Will she not assist us, when we address our heavenly Father in the words of her Divine Son? We may suppose that often she recited it with her Divine Son; for He taught it and would have it be the formula of prayer in the New Law.—And will she not assist us in hallowing the name of God? No angel has ever sung the thrice holy with more ardor than Mary; no mother has ever desired more ardently that the name of her Son be held sacred, than Mary, the Mother of God. Hence we shall never doubt that she will not assist us in our prayers and present them to the heavenly Father.

EXAMPLE.

St. Elizabeth was wedded in her twelfth year to Dionys, king of Portugal. In this state she did not neglect to practise the devotion, to which she had been accustomed from childhood. Never did

she omit to implore the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, to ask her protection and to beseech her assistance, especially for the hour of death. After the death of her husband she entered the convent, which she had built, fully intent to practise penance. She waited upon her companions herself; she loved especially the poor, whom she done much good. Poverty was her cherished virtue; and therefore she despised all worldly splendor and sought to please only her heavenly Father. And in order to continue in His grace she did not cease to revere Mary, the Queen of heaven, with most tender devotion. Her feasts she celebrated with special delight. On the vigils of these feasts she fasted,—taking but water and bread, and devoted herself to prayer. She had the firm belief that by venerating Mary she would die a blessed death, which also occurred in the year 1336.

PRAYER.

O my dear Mother Mary, obtain thou for me the grace of becoming and remaining a good child of my heavenly Father. Accept me, O good Mother, and lead me to His throne. Cause me also to renounce all self-glory and to seek only the glory of God and the blessing of His name. Assist me to think frequently of the good Father in heaven, and to live so upon earth that hereafter I may be received in the heavenly home. Amen.

ELEVENTH DAY OF MAY.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE ROSARY.

We have considered briefly the excellency of the Lord's prayer, which is recited in the beginning of every decade of the holy rosary. It has derived its excellency from the fact that it was taught by Christ Jesus, by God himself, and being taught by Him, we may confidently expect to be heard when reciting it, if whatsoever we ask is to our spiritual and temporal welfare. It consists of an introduction and seven petitions. We have seen briefly that God is our Father in heaven, the Father of all mankind. We have reflected upon the words: "Hallowed be Thy name." Let us pass over to the second petition.

"Thy kingdom come."—This is the second petition. What do we mean by these words? The kingdom of God may be taken in a threefold sense. Firstly: the kingdom of nature by which God as the Creator and absolute Lord of all things, guides and governs all created beings. Not for this kingdom do we ask; it is come already;—we live in it. Secondly: the kingdom of truth and grace. We beg here to be made better acquainted

with His divine revelations, to understand better the doctrines and laws of His holy church on earth, and at the same time to obtain the graces, by which God leads and rules the hearts and souls of His good children, that they may know, love and serve Him, and seek His honor before all and in all. This kingdom, also, is come, even now for the greater part. Thirdly: the kingdom of glory, which is yet to come, and shall be completed and fully manifested after the consummation of this world in the life to come. We beg, chiefly and above all, for this kingdom of eternal glory, which is so ardently desired by us all who are but too well acquainted with the shortness, folly and misery of this earthly life. We beg that our heavenly Father may give us eternal glory, us all without exception, since He is our Father, we His children, and among ourselves, brothers and sisters.—How sinful, then, to abuse the kingdom of nature? How sinful to act contrary to God's revelations and doctrines? How sinful to trample upon His graces? How great the danger of losing by such conduct the kingdom of glory?—Let us pray in truth: "Thy kingdom come."

Next, we say: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In the second petition we have asked for heaven as the final destiny of man; and now we pray for the principal means of reaching it—namely, the observance of God's holy will and

commandments. This is a most important duty; for Christ himself says: "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter the kingdom of heaven;" (Matth. 7. 21.) and again: "If thou wilt enter life, keep my commandments." (Matth. 19. 17.) Hence, we must in order to do the will of God, obey His commandments and the precepts of His church, and perform conscientiously the duties of our state of life. Yea, we must submit and resign ourselves to His holy will in all adversities and sufferings that befall us, since He, being our Creator and Lord, can do with us what He wills. Beautifully does St. Augustin explain this petition, saying: "We say in the third petition: Oh, heavenly Father! strengthen us by Thy grace, that we regulate our whole conduct according to Thy commands, . . . that we walk before Thy countenance in sanctity and righteousness all the days of our life, that we perform all duties to Thee, as well as to our neighbors, that we renounce all evil desires, that we do violence to ourselves and reject entirely our self-will. Only Thy will be done." And how shall it be done? The Saint continues: "Strengthen us, that we obey, . . . that we be faithful, . . . that we be zealous, . . . that we persevere, . . . like the angels in heaven."—And do we perform

the will of the heavenly Father in this manner, like the angels and saints in heaven? If not, let us do so henceforth.

The fourth petition: "Give us this day our daily bread," forms a beautiful centre in the Lord's prayer. The first three petitions appertain principally to God's glory,—the last three to our salvation; whilst the fourth expresses the conditions that enable us to increase God's glory, and work out our salvation. We ask for bread in a two-fold sense: for our bodies and for our souls; in other words: we humbly beg of God, the Author and Fountain, to give us what is necessary for this life and for the life to come. We are children of God. Hence, like a good child, we must approach our heavenly Father, from whom all good comes, and ask Him to give us. We, furthermore, say: "this day," because we do not wish to be solicitous about to-morrow, not knowing whether we shall live till then; and we say: "our daily bread," asking thereby God's blessing upon our temporal goods, and labors, and lawful occupations, that thus we may be freed from oppressive poverty, and earn an honest living. This is our material bread, the nourishment of our bodies. But our souls also need nourishment. Hence we also pray for the daily bread of our souls,—the bread of the word of God, thereby asking that the true doctrines of God's church be proffered to us and to all men,

and that the heavenly bread—the most blessed Eucharist, be always offered up for us and given to us for the maintenance of the life of our souls. Have we, when reciting the words: "Give us this day our daily bread," reflected upon their meaning? Have we been satisfied with what God has given us? Have we returned thanks for all we have received?

"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." How important is this petition? These trespasses are our sins by which we offend God, and must therefore atone for them; these trespasses make us debtors as regards the punishments due to them. Now, we beg of God to forgive us, poor sinners, our trespasses, our sins and their well-deserved punishments; and in order to move Him to mercy we add: as we forgive those who trespass against us. Thus we make the forgiveness of our trespasses dependent, to a certain extent, upon our forgiveness of trespasses committed against us. Hence we must first forgive, and then it shall be forgiven us. Christ plainly says: "Forgive, and you shall be forgiven." (Luc. 6. 37.) But if we forgive not, how dare we expect God to forgive us? St. Augustin says: "Perhaps some one has offended you? Forgive him, lest, if you close the door of mercy upon your brother, you also close the door of pardon between you and your heavenly Father." Let us

always reflect earnestly upon this petition and act accordingly.

"Lead us not into temptation."—Temptations are, indeed, the only road to real evil, to sin. Hence, we may beg of God not to permit us to fall, but to be saved from these temptations. Man is in danger on all sides. Satan goes about seeking to devour him; he excites man's evil inclinations and passions; he strives to lead man away from the service of God; he pictures virtue in hideous colors and draws an agreeable veil over vice; all means will he employ to lead man astray.—And the world! Everywhere it lays snares to man's innocence by scandalous sights and examples, by sinful conversation and vile literature, by tempters in human form.—And our own flesh!—Not without reason did Christ say: "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Who has not yet experienced those terrible temptations of the flesh? Let us, therefore, often pray: "Lead us not into temptation; let us ask our heavenly Father to prevent our fall, and to give us grace to gain a glorious victory.

"But deliver us from evil." There is a vast difference of opinion as regards evil. Some consider poverty, sickness, sufferings, accidents, death, and the like, to be evils, and beg to be delivered from them. This is allowed; but we shall not forget to add the condition: if it be Thy will, O Lord, de-

liver me. A greater evil than all on earth, is sin; and from this we must beg to be delivered. Sin is, indeed, the only evil, from which all other supposed evils arise. "It cannot be denied," says St. Chrysostom, "that sin is the cause of all evil." Therefore, we beg in the words: "Deliver us from evil," principally of God the pardon of our sins; we humbly ask Him to preserve us against all sin, at least not to permit us to offend Him by one mortal sin, and also, to deliver us from the consequences of sin—its punishments here and in eternity. We close with the word: "Amen," meaning: Be it so;—thus be it done. May God graciously hear our petitions clothed in the words of His Divine Son.

And now let us look upon Mary. She, being full of grace and certain of her eternal glory, prayed for the kingdom of truth,—the propagation of the doctrines of her Divine Son everywhere and throughout all centuries. She, too, did the will of God at all times and under all circumstances, calling herself the hand-maid of the Lord. She, too, prayed for the daily bread, not solicitous for the coming day, but trusted in Divine Providence. She forgave her deadly enemies, those who tortured her maternal heart by crucifying her beloved Son, though for herself she needed not forgiveness, being free from all sin. She prayed for deliverance from temptations and evils, not for her-

self, but for us, poor sinful creatures. Hence we shall call upon her, our Mother and Mediatrix, we shall implore her intercession, so powerful with God, and we shall obtain what we ask in the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer.

EXAMPLE.

In her childhood already St. Catherine of Siena loved solitude and prayer. With edifying devotion she recited the "Our Father" and the "Hail, Mary." As often as she ascended or descended the stairs in her parents' house, she saluted Mary with the angelic salutation on every step. Having grown older she made the vow of virginity, on account of which she was obliged to suffer very much, and was treated as a menial servant in her parental home, because she should have married. Yet she received heavenly comfort. When she was seventeen years of age, Jesus with His glorious Mother appeared to her and said: "My daughter! for My sake thou hast despised the vanities of the world, renounced the pleasures of the flesh and sought in Me alone the delight of thy heart; therefore I will make thee My bride in faith, as I have promised thee." Thus Catherine lived as a spouse of Christ and servant of Mary until her death in the year 1380.

PRAYER.

Into Thy arms, O heavenly Father, I cast myself; ward Thou off all evils that surround me, and take me into Thy heavenly home. In Thee, O my Saviour, I put my trust, hear Thou my prayer which thou hast taught me. Under thy patronage, O holy Virgin Mary, do I fly, protect thou me, intercede for me, lead me to heaven. Amen.

TWELFTH DAY OF MAY.

THE ANGELIC SALUTATION IN THE ROSARY.

We have, no doubt, reflected to our spiritual advantage upon excellent forms of prayer—the sign of the cross, so significant to every Christian,—the Apostles' Creed or the profession of faith without which no one can be saved,—the doxology, or the Glory be to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, in which we join all celestial spirits,—the Lord's prayer, so beneficial to body and soul. Yet these prayers form but the smaller portion of the rosary. One prayer, short and beautiful, is repeated ten times in each of the fifteen decades,—the angelic salutation, or as it is commonly called: the Hail, Mary. Why this frequent repetition? Because the rosary-devotion tends particularly to the veneration of Mary, the blessed Mother of God; by it we magnify her whom God has exalted so high; by it we realize the words of Mary in the gospel: "Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." (Luc. 1. 48.)

True it is, this prayer is objectionable to some on account of its frequent repetition, or too much honor bestowed upon Mary. But will not a good

child address its mother often? Will not a good child be honored in its mother? The same holds good regarding us and Mary, the blessed Virgin. We are her children, she our Mother, and as such it is our urgent duty to honor her highly. Mary is the Mother of God, and as such we must honor and venerate her; for the honor of the mother confers also honor upon the child. But why trouble ourselves about these and the like objections! Whence have we received this prayer? From the Angel Gabriel, St. Elizabeth, and from our holy Church.

Moved by the misery of the children of Adam, the heavenly Father resolved to put an end to their distress by sending them a Redeemer, a Saviour in the person of Jesus Christ, His dearly beloved Son. At the time appointed by divine wisdom, already in the beginning of the world, or as holy Scriptures say: "When the fullness of time was come," (Gal. 4.) "the Angel Gabriel was sent from God, into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary." (Luc. 1. 26. 27.) Humble and pure of heart this holy virgin served her Lord and God in all virtues and righteousness. In one of those holy hours when wrapt up in prayer and meditation before her God, the Angel announced to her the glad tidings that she was chosen to be the Mother of the promised

Messiah.—"And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of David, his father, and he shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the Angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the Angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. . . . And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." (Luc. 1. 26, etc.) This is the gospel narration of the first part of this prayer.

Having heard from the Angel that her cousin Elizabeth was with child, Mary hastened to visit her. And when she had entered the house, Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, saluted her saying: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me,

that the Mother of my Lord should come to me." (Luc. 1. 39. etc.) This is the second part.

The third part: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners, now and in the hour of our death," has been added by our holy Church at the Council of Ephesus, in which the Nestorian heresy —denying to Mary the title of Mother of God, was condemned. How beautiful, how excellent this prayer to the holy Virgin and Mother, Mary! Hence the blessed Thomas a Kempis also says: "The Angelic salutation made upon the direction of the Holy Ghost, is entirely adequate to dignity and sanctity. It is a prayer small in words, sublime in mysteries, short for recital, extensive in power, sweeter than honey and more precious than gold,—a prayer that we should often read and recite with pure lips."

And what honor is conferred upon Mary by this salutation? The heavenly Father salutes her as His beloved daughter,—the Son of God as His dear Mother,—the Holy Ghost as His chosen spouse,—the most blessed Trinity, by the ministry of an angel, salute this humble handmaid of the Lord: "Hail, Mary!" If that be considered great honor to be saluted by a king through his minister, how much more excellent and sublime must be the salutation sent to Mary from the majestic King of heaven and earth? Verily, "Mary, thou hast found grace with God."

And this salutation, will it not be acceptable to the ever-blessed Mother of God? Why this question? Do we not praise her by repeating the Angelic salutation on account of her virtues and prerogatives? Do we not recall her sublime dignity as Mother of God? Do we not remind her of the gracious mystery of the incarnation? Do we not mention her preeminence over all of her sex? Yea, and do we not fly to her as to our Mother, to our Mediatrix with Jesus, asking her powerful intercession? No doubt, this salutation is not only acceptable to her, but will even be rewarded by her intercession. And who can number the instances which manifested Mary's maternal care, intercession and power? No one, indeed; wherefore St. Bernard addresses Mary truthfully, saying: "Never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help and thy intercession was left unaided."

Yet, Christian sŏuls, in order to perceive better the sublimity and merit of the Angelic salutation, let us reflect somewhat upon its different parts.

"Hail, Mary!" If we salute anyone or send our greetings, we wish to manifest thereby our respect, our kind feelings, our love. The same is expressed by the Angel's salutation; the same as if he said: "Hail, Mary! thou possessest in a high degree the pleasure of God, and art appointed in preference to all others of thy sex, to a sublime dignity."

And now, we by repeating these words, express also our joy and veneration to Mary, on account of the dignity wherewith she had been invested; we congratulate Mary on the sublimity of her election; we salute her and rejoice in having the happiness of saluting her as the Mother of God, and our Mother, thus verifying her prediction: "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed;" we praise and salute her on account of the many and great virtues that made her worthy to be exalted. And this, her dignity, she ascribes to the Omnipotent God, "because He that is mighty, hath done great things to me: and holy is His name." (Luc. 1. 49.) "All inhabitants of heaven pay homage to her (Mary) on account of her sublime dignity, and indescribable blessedness," says Cardinal Hugo. "She is the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem, the joy and bliss of the faithful and the honor of the entire human race."—"The praise due to thee, O holiest Virgin, is inexpressible," remarks St. Gregory, "because the Son of God has chosen thee to be His Mother. All creatures, in heaven and on earth, are obliged to honor thee, because thou art the throne of divine majesty."

"Hail, Mary, full of grace." Thus we pray, and praise thereby this holy Virgin, because she was free not only from original sin and actual sins, but was on account of the dignity, to which God decreed to elevate her, adorned most perfectly with

all the gifts of the Holy Ghost. She was indeed a vessel of grace. "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee."—Mary grew constantly in grace; for by her good works she increased sanctifying grace, and thus ascended to such a high degree of perfection and sanctity, as to excel all blessed spirits. "The life of Mary was a constant progress from virtue to virtue." And finally, since Mary is full of grace, she can impart it to others; for, remarks St. Thomas Aquinas: "Mary is full of grace, not only for herself, but for all men."—"Hail, Mary, full of grace." Let us frequently salute Mary by these words, let us have recourse to this gracious Mother, and implore of her some of the graces, with which she had been filled. Like many others we shall partake of the riches of her graces, and by our own experience learn to know and honor Mary as "the Mother of divine grace."

EXAMPLE.

Of St. Bernard it may be said, that at baptism already love and devotion to the ever-blessed Virgin Mary was infused into his heart. With astonishment it was noticed, that joy caused him in his tenderest childhood to tremble when he beheld a picture of Mary, or heard her sweet name mentioned. As a young man St. Bernard found himself

exposed to many dangers; therefore he entered a monastery. Here he manifested his love to the blessed Mother of God, which no pen is able to describe. He was the herald of the Queen of heaven, the most zealous announcer of her unfathomable beauty and sanctity, the inspired preacher of her incomprehensible prerogatives and excellent virtues, the most childlike venerator of Mary. His words seized powerfully the hearts of his cotemporaries and drew them gently to the love and veneration of Mary. In his whole life, devoted to the glory of God and the salvation of men, he never failed until his death in the year 1153 to propagate everywhere the veneration of Mary.

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD.

Remember, O most merciful Virgin Mary, that it is unheard of, that any one flying to thee for protection, imploring thy help, or seeking thy intercession, was ever forsaken. Animated by this unerring confidence, I hasten to thee, Virgin of virgins; I fly to thee, O sweet Mother, a wretched sinner, I prostrate myself sighing at thy feet; despise not my prayer, O Mother of the Divine Word, but graciously hear and grant the same. Amen.

THIRTEENTH DAY OF MAY.

THE ANGELIC SALUTATION IN THE ROSARY.

"Mary is to us a Mother, full of kindness and mercy," says St. Bernard, "if we salute her with the Angel, if we invoke her with the Church." And St. Bonaventure remarks: "The blessed Virgin gladly salutes us in return with nothing but consolations and benefits, if we frequently salute her with this prayer."—Hence, Christian souls, we should be encouraged by the Angel's example to salute Mary. We have considered briefly the words: "Hail, Mary, full of grace;" let us now continue to reflect upon the remainder of the Angelic salutation.

"Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." The manner in which God is with us human beings, is various. In virtue of His boundlessness He fills heaven and earth; and wheresoever is a creature, there also is the Creator. In virtue of His love, kindness and providence, He is more especially with the just, who love and serve Him, and in whose hearts He has made His abode. But where is the creature more exalted than Mary? Where the creature more just than Mary?

—Hence "the Lord is with her" in the fulness of grace: He is personally with her having assumed human nature of her: He is with her during His entire earthly career: He is with her, because she is the Mother of the incarnate Word of God. From the first instance of her conception, till the last moment of her most holy life the Lord is with her, and is with her now in eternal glory. "Verily, whom should God have granted more graces than her, who had merited to conceive and bring forth the Author of grace," asks St. Augustine. "Thou, O Mary, art become the golden house," says St. Andrew of Jerusalem, "in which God was made flesh, and the terrestrial heaven, where God has erected His throne to dwell among us."—"Hail, Mary, the Lord is with thee."

"Blessed art thou among women." By these words we praise Mary as the most blessed among all of her sex; yea, among all human and celestial beings; for God had chosen her to be the Mother of His Son. What great honor! And with the honor of a mother she unites that of a virgin. She is the virgin, of whom the prophet foretold: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel, that is, God with us." Here Mary possesses a prerogative never conferred upon any of her sex,—to be mother and at the same time a virgin. Therefore we praise Mary as the blessed

among women. Without her we would not have had a Saviour, and without a Saviour we would still be in darkness of death and could not obtain salvation. We praise her blessed among women, because by her divine maternity she is become our Mother, spiritually in the order of grace. "The holy Virgin is blessed indeed," says St. Peter Chrysologus; she is blessed, because she had the honor to conceive a child that was God, and to remain the Queen of virgins."

"And blessed is the fruit of thy womb." Thus we continue in our prayer. And since the year 1262, upon direction of Pope Urban IV, we add the most holy name: Jesus. As we, following the example of Elizabeth, praise the fruit of Mary's womb,—Jesus, so this most sacred fruit was praised and blessed already by the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Law, yea, by the angels of heaven. "But now," says a devout servant of God, "as the fruit will give credit to the tree that bore it, so will Jesus (this blessed fruit of the womb of Mary), praise His Mother that bore him. We honor Mary for her Son's sake." Moreover, we express our joy and gratitude in these words for the gracious work of redemption, by which we have again been made children of God and heirs of heaven, "for there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4. 12.)—We furthermore add this most holy

name, in order to atone somewhat for the dishonor and insult offered to it not only by heathens or by infidels, but also by so many bad Christians. We add it to express our childlike confidence in this powerful name, and to make ourselves worthy partakers of the graces of this most gracious name; in short, to remember what St. Bernard says: "The name of Jesus is a sign, that represents to us all that God has done for our salvation." Thus, then, the angelic salutation includes the praise of all prerogatives of Mary, both in the order of nature and of grace.—The conclusion embraces petitions to Mary.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God." In these words our holy church wishes to express what we should believe and hope of Mary. We call Mary holy, and justly so; for as she excels all blessed spirits in dignity,—she being the Mother of God, so also does she excel in sanctity. She is really the Mother of God. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," said the Angel, "and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." (Luc. 1. 35.) And St. John Damascene remarks: "Of Mary was born the Son of God, and the incarnate God; not a man bearing the divinity, but really God in the flesh. . . . She is really and truly the Mother of God." And this is the strongest reason of our

confidence in Mary. She is the Mother of God, she is our Mother; she gave us the incarnate Son of God, and her Son as our brother. Now, if earthly sons will grant their mothers' requests, will Mary have less influence with her divine Son? How much more readily will Christ hear His Mother's prayer in our behalf?—Confidently, therefore, did St. Anselm exclaim: "O blessed confidence! O certain refuge! The Mother of my God is also my Mother."

Trusting in Mary's power our church teaches us to say: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners." "Who indeed," asks St. Bernard, "can speak more forcibly to the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, than thou, O most holy and blessed Virgin? . . . Thou art the Mother, He the Son! What all may we hope of thy intercession!" —And indeed, who has not experienced the power of Mary's intercession? "Whence comes it," asks St. Anselm, "that we are often heard sooner by imploring Mary, than Jesus? It is not for the reason as if the Mother were greater or more powerful than the Son; for she is powerful only through Him. . . . But if any one calls upon the name of the Mother, and he himself does not deserve to be heard, the Mother who prays for him and lets her merits speak for the unworthy, deserves to be heard." And who of us, poor, miserable sinners, is not in need of her powerful in-

tercession? In the sight of God we are unworthy creatures; on account of our many sins we deserve punishment; hence we beseech Mary, this most affectionate and merciful Mother, to intercede for us;—and with what result? St. Bernard says: "I tell you, . . . if we call upon her (Mary) devoutly, she will have compassion with us and assist us in our necessities. Neither power nor will is wanting to her; for she is the Queen of heaven and the Mother of mercy."

And when shall Mary pray for us?—"Now, and in the hour of our death." "Now" signifies the present time, our life-time on earth. And who, indeed, is not in need of supernatural assistance during life? How many are the trials of life? How numerous the adversities? How sore the afflictions? How severe the necessities of this earthly life?—And what are the dangers to the soul? How many occasions to sin? How numerous the temptations? How fearful the assaults of satan, of the world, and of the flesh? Knowing this well, St. John Damascene exclaimed: "Approach thou, O Mother of my Saviour, approach, and I shall not burn in the midst of temptations' flames, amid thousand snares I shall be safe, amid winds and waves of temptations I shall not fear shipwreck. I fear nothing, if thou art my protection, I am not timid as to my weakness, if strengthened by thee."

But especially "in the hour of death" is supernatural assistance necessary. Dreadful sufferings await us upon the death-bed. We must leave all and are left by all; our consciences are troubled by the recollection of our, perhaps, numerous sins, the fear of the coming judgment and the uncertainty of our future condition. Add to this the terrible assaults of Satan who in these decisive moments renews his attacks, makes his last effort with renewed vigor to destroy our souls for heaven and to cast them into the infernal abyss. Who does not perceive the great necessity of supernatural help in these last moments? And where shall we find it? With Mary; she has been our Mother in life, she will be our Mother in the hour of death, in our last and decisive moments. St. Bonaventure tells us that Mary sends angels to protect her dying servants and to receive the souls of those who have in life recommended themselves to her in a special manner.—As in the Lord's prayer, so do we close the Angelic salutation by saying: Amen,—let it be thus; this I hope, expressing thereby our childlike confidence that the blessed Mother of God will accept our salutation and present our prayer at the throne of mercy. Let us, therefore, often reflect upon the words of the Angelic salutation, and recite it most devoutly for the welfare of body and soul.

EXAMPLE.

In the life of St. Andrew Avellino, we read that in his last hour, he had such a terrible struggle with Satan, that his brethren in religion trembled in fear. His countenance swelled and grew dark, his limbs trembled, with hands and feet he appeared to contend against the last assaults of hell. They increased their prayers, he looking meanwhile steadily upon an image of the blessed Mother of God. At last the struggle ended; his countenance brightened, and bowing to the image, he gave up his soul. "Thus also shalt thou die," remarks St. Alphonsus Liguori, . . . if thou hast served her (Mary) faithfully in life, and confidently invoked her help in the hour of death."

PRAYER.

In all my necessities I will fly to thee, O my dear Mother Mary, but especially in the misery of my sinful state; despise not my prayers, but by thy intercession and power deliver me from all evil; let me, poor sinner, approach and invoke thee now to assist me in my last moments. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners, now and in the hour of our death." Amen.

FOURTEENTH DAY OF MAY.

PRAYER FOR INCREASE OF FAITH IN THE ROSARY.

In the devotion of the rosary we recite after the first: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," one "Hail Mary," and ask Jesus to increase our faith. And indeed, faith is exceedingly important. "Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him," says St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11. 6.) Faith is necessary to lead a Christian life, which means nothing else than to shun the evil and to do the good. But this is taught by faith; for St. John says: "This is the victory, which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (I. 5. 4.) Faith is indispensably necessary to obtain life everlasting; for Christ, the Eternal Truth says: "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" (John 3. 36.) and again: "He that believeth not, shall be condemned." (Mark 16. 16.)

But what must you believe? All that God has revealed and what He commands us by His church to believe. And all this is so sufficiently proved that, with the help of the grace of faith poured into your hearts in holy baptism, faith will not be difficult to a good heart. Yet it is not to be denied that a perverse heart can doubt and oppose it. Mary's heart possessed such a good will that Elizabeth called her blessed on account of her faith. Yea, there was a day when the hearts of all faithful tottered, as it were, only the heart of Mary excepted,—the day before Christ's resurrection. Hence, for this one reason also, is Saturday devoted through all ages to the special veneration of Mary. We pray to her, and with her, that faith may never fail in our hearts, but always strike deeper roots. But we also learn of her, what is more important, that "the just liveth by faith." (Rom. 1. 17.)

"The just man liveth by faith." To him faith is not a mere opinion, or an acquired science, but it is the motive power and regulator of all his thoughts, words and deeds,—of his whole life. Faith teaches him whence all, whereby all, whereto all is.

Faith teaches that all is from God; for He is the Creator of all things. Thousands of lifeless beings, millions of stars and planets, innumerable plants and animals, the whole universe, are the

work of His hands; they announce the glory of God, and, like messengers sent by God, they call upon us with one voice as it were: "Behold, how great is your God, who has created us to serve and please you. Employ us in His service, fulfill His commands with a good and free will, as we do through necessity. He has made you our King. Offer us upon the altar of your hearts to your King, and abuse us not in the service of sin. The first human beings have abused us; hence the tear in nature; hence the dangers of elements." And if we understand this language of all creatures, if we reflect that we, too, went forth from the omnipotent hands of God, will we not live by faith? Will we not believe what God has revealed, what is contained in the venerable Apostles' Creed, what is commanded to be believed by His church, and live by this faith, that is, lead a life corresponding in every thing to our faith?

Faith, moreover, teaches us that all things are placed under a divine providence. In the life of a human being nothing is mere chance; nothing happens perchance; all is sent by God to our welfare, though at times our limited understanding cannot comprehend it. Even what appears evil to us, and what we must suffer, is either intended or permitted by God,—a means in His hands for our amendment and perfection. And if we be just, we live by this faith, believing the words in

the book of Proverbs. . . . "Reject not the correction of the Lord: and do not faint when thou art chastised by Him; for whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth." (3. 11–12.)

Faith, finally, teaches the end for which we have been created: to serve and love God on earth and to be united with Him in heaven hereafter. As everything created has, according to the decree of the all-wise God, a particular end; so must man—the master-piece of creation, have an end, and this consists by no means in an uninterrupted enjoyment of this earth, far less in the short time allotted to life, and then to be annihilated. By the light of reason and voice of conscience, which partly manifest to us God's attributes and holy will, and by the revelations of God in this important matter, we know that our end is: to learn to know better by means of that divine gift—reason, God's infinite attributes, His divine will and His salutary institutions for our welfare, or to increase in wisdom; to love Him with all our hearts; to devote the powers of mind and body to His service and to the attainments of sanctity, and thus to become worthy of everlasting happiness in heaven. "Take hold of the means to attain true wisdom—eternal happiness," says St. Gregory of Nazianzen; "for in this consist the true wisdom, vocation and destiny of man." Hence the motto of St. Ignatius should also be ours: "Omnia ad majorem Dei

gloriam—All to the greater glory of God." "All our thoughts, words, actions, and desires for God; all for the glory of God, whensoever, wheresoever, and howsoever He wills.

All this, Christian souls, points out to us the qualities necessary for our faith, should it be pleasing to God and deserving of life everlasting. We must believe,—of this there is no doubt, that all is from God:—that is our faith must be complete, universal. This means: we must believe all without a single exception, what God has deigned to reveal and what He presents to our belief by His infallible church You remember that the Apostles were sent out and commanded by Christ Jesus to "teach all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Hence, the necessity of an universal faith; all must believe, all must be believed. And so important is it to believe all that salvation depends upon it; for St. Ambrose says: "Takest thou away but one article of faith, thou takest away thy salvation."—We must believe in a childlike manner, without doubting, without questioning for the reasons, without hesitating, but subjecting our reason to the revelations of God, because He has spoken, and to the teachings of His church, because He has given her supreme authority of teaching. Very prudently does St. Augustin remark that the certainty of our faith does not

depend upon a vivid conception of the mind, but rather upon simplicity. And who knows not how some of the most learned men in their pride and self-conceit have apostatized? Like children placing unreserved confidence in their parents, so should we give captive our reason to faith through obedience to Christ.

We must have a lively faith; that is: our faith must be expressed in our manner of life. You well understand that to say: I am a Christian, I am a Catholic, will not suffice, but you must prove it, just like a child must prove its belief in its parents by performing filial duties towards them. Our speech, our works, our dress, our gait, our entire self must manifest our faith, according to St. Augustine, who says: "With true faith unite a holy life, that you confess Christ by your words in believing the truth, and by your works in living righteously." Faith is like a seed, it must sprout, blossom and yield fruit. So must faith yield good fruits—that is: it must be proved not only by word of mouth, but by good works which are the fruits of a true, lively faith.—We must, finally, have a firm, persevering faith; that is: we must be ready to suffer adversities, persecutions and pains, yea, even death, as did millions of holy martyrs, rather than deviate a finger's breadth from our holy faith; for he that persevereth unto the end, shall be crowned. Like the valiant soldier

who, led out to battle, fears neither danger nor death, so should the faithful Christian profess his faith courageously, and perseveringly in the face of all opposition, that he, too, may gain the laurels of victory.

And now, Christian souls, we beg for an increase of faith in the rosary-devotion. And justly so. Is not Mary the sublimest model of faith? Did she mistrust the words of the Angel announcing to her that she was chosen to be the Mother of God? Did she not believe the words of Simeon in the temple, and kept them in her heart? Was not Mary's life a chain of suffering, contempt and persecution? Yet she saw in all this the finger of the Omnipotent and Benevolent Father, and endeavored to understand His intentions with her, and helped to realize them. Nothing did she ascribe to chance. And her life, was it not also an expression of a lively faith? Resigned to His holy will Mary performed all that God had revealed to her; "behold," she said, "behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word." Her whole life was an unmistakable proof of her great faith. Let us ask her to obtain for us such great faith.

EXAMPLE.

St. Bonaventure was a zealous venerator of Mary. Endowed by God with excellent talents

and acute reason, he entered the order of St. Francis, according to a promise made by His mother, and there distinguished himself by his great learning. He studied only to increase God's glory and to propagate the faith in His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. His great faith manifested itself in his works; but all he drew from the fountain of the holy cross. However no one can believe in God without remembering His most holy Mother; so also Bonaventure. He chose Mary as his protectress; he introduced certain devotional exercises; he wrote beautiful words upon Mary's prerogatives and graces; he composed several hymns in her honor. Whilst his renown spread abroad, he lived as an humble and zealous servant of Jesus and Mary until his holy death, which occurred in the year 1274.

PRAYER.

I believe, O Mary; but assist thou me in my belief. Great are the temptations against faith; help me. Teach me to think always of God, to walk in His presence, to die to my evil inclinations, and to live daily more in God and to seek nothing but His divine pleasure by faith and its works. Amen.

FIFTEENTH DAY OF MAY.

PRAYER FOR STRENGTH OF HOPE IN THE ROSARY.

In the rosary-devotion we beg for an increase of faith, which is the beginning, the foundation, and the root of justification, and of a christian life. But from the root of faith sprouts forth the divine virtue of hope; for "faith is the substance of things to be hoped for," says St. Paul; (Heb. 11. 1.) and St. Maximus calls "hope a beautiful fruit of faith." Hence without true faith there can be no true hope; for "how can anything be hoped, if it be not believed?" asks St. Augustine. What, then, is hope? —Hope is a virtue imparted by God, by means of which we expect with firm confidence all that God has promised us on account of Christ's merits, especially life everlasting and all means necessary to attain it. Hence the Christian virtue of hope consists of two parts, two conditions, or two sentiments of the soul, namely,—desire and confidence. And the more sincere and efficient our desire, and the more trusting our confidence is in attaining all treasures promised by God, the more perfect will be the virtue of hope.

As long as we are sojourners on earth, we are never satisfied. One desire follows the other, one

longing after the other, so much so indeed, that we often forget to hope for what is of eternal importance. Our earthly-minded, sinful hearts are bound by many chains to this transitory world,—are entangled by many temporal thoughts, worldly cares and desires, and can, therefore, raise themselves only with great difficulty to their Creator in heaven. What we see, what we hear, what we feel, what we enjoy, just at present, is oftentimes the very limit of our desires, is frequently the only object of our heart's wishes. Seldom, indeed, do we remind ourselves that this visible world is but a temporary abode for us, and that after a few years our pilgrimage ends in another as yet invisible world. But what folly is it to expect only the temporal and transitory? What blindness to hope only for worldly goods? Is there anything in this wide world that can satisfy the cravings of man's heart? Nothing indeed. Even he that possessed all in superabundance, whatsoever his heart could desire, —Solomon, exclaimed: "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity."

What, then, should our hope include? Firstly: all spiritual treasures—eternal life, and all means necessary to obtain it,—pardon of sins, grace to do good, and perseverance unto death. This, no doubt, is the principal object of our hope—eternal happiness. It lies buried in our hearts; and we all feel that wonderful desire after happiness that

reigns above the friendly stars of the firmament, and that consists in the beatific vision of God, in a possession from which no one can expel us, in a joy that shall not be marred by any afflictions, not embittered by any grief or sorrow, in a happiness in which we possess all in God. "This is the promise which He hath promised us, life everlasting," says St. John. (I. 2. 25.) We shall hope for pardon of sins; for the wise man already says: "God is compassionate and merciful, and will forgive sins in the day of tribulation: and He is a protector to all that seek Him in truth." (Eccli. 2. 13.) We shall hope for grace to do good; for "God never leaves man," says St. Augustine, "until man has left Him."

Secondly: we may hope for temporal goods,—health and long life, prosperity, protection against all dangers, and the like, in so far as they are useful and necessary means of obtaining life everlasting. David already says: "The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord: and Thou givest them meat in due season. Thou openest Thy hand, and fillest with blessing every living creature."(Ps. 144. 15. 16.) And St. John of the Cross remarks: "God knows what we need. To serve Him faithfully is our business; to provide for our temporal and eternal welfare is His work. O heavenly hope, that receivest as much as thou hopest!"

And now, Christian souls, we pray that this hope

may be strengthened; and justly so. How often does David admonish us to hope in the Lord God? How often do the prophets encourage by hope the people of Israel in all adversities and distress? How often does Christ seek to awaken in His disciples true hope—sincere desire and firm confidence in God? How often do the apostles beg the faithful to hope and trust in God, and how do they reprove their diffidence? All this proves the necessity of this divine virtue of hope. Indeed, banish hope, and what is left?

No heart perceived this truth and desired it more than the heart of Mary. It was disengaged from the world; it was free from attachment to her relatives, leaving her paternal home at the age of three years to serve God in the temple; it was free from vain-glory, espousing as she of royal blood did, a poor but most virtuous carpenter; it was free from concupiscence of temporal wealth, living in solitary poverty; it was free from earthly desires. Hence she can teach us by her example to die to this treacherous world, and to live for God alone in the hope of eternal bliss after this transitory life in the world to come.

But if we hope for, if we desire all that God who is infinitely faithful, has promised us, we must also trust that he will give it on account of the merits of Jesus Christ, His divine Son and our dear Saviour. And in this point we often, very often

fail, either by presumption, or more frequently by diffidence.

Upon almost every page of Holy Writ, our good God begs of us to trust in Him, to place all our confidence in Him, and not to doubt His love, mercy and benevolence. What touching parables did He employ to strengthen our confidence in Him? "Behold," such are the contents of the gospel, "behold how much God loves you."—"Come to me all ye, that labor and are burdened and I will refresh you."—"Whatsoever you ask the Father in My name, he will give it to you."—"Ask and you shall receive." Such are the words of Christ. But where is our confidence? How little do we expect by our prayer? How much more do we trust in the world than in God? How much do we trust in health and wealth, in prosperity and acquirements; setting aside God's infinite love and mercy, God's omnipotent power and fatherly benevolence? And yet all else is vain; all else vanishes like smoke but too frequently before the eyes of those who place all their trust therein. And how often does our hope, our confidence sink to the ground? Like Peter, we jump into the water, but seeing a wave,—trials, afflictions, adversities, come upon us, we lose courage, we drop our trust in God, so that He could reprove us in the same words: "Thou of little faith, why hast thou doubted?"

Hence let us hope in a well-regulated manner; that is: let us hope first for the eternal, and then only for the temporal, inasmuch as it is the means of obtaining life everlasting. "Offer up the sacrifice of justice, and trust in the Lord," says David. (Ps. 4. 6.) Let us hope with the greatest firmness and confidence, so that nothing whatsoever can cause us to totter. "Let our hope be immutable," says St. Augustin, "and have its destiny in God; let it not waver and be driven hither and thither, but let it be firm like God upon whom it rests." Let us finally hope with a holy and salutary fear, that we may not become presumptuous. "Fear the Lord in such a manner," says St. Augustin, "that thou hast hope in His mercy." And why shall we hope thus? Let St. Chrysostom answer. "There are three things, upon which rests my hope," he says: "the love in which the heavenly Father has adopted me, the truth of His promise, and the power to fulfill it. Let now my foolish reason murmur and say: Who art thou? And how great is the glory which thou hopest to obtain? Confidently will I answer: I know in whom I have believed, and I am certain that by His exceedingly great love He has adopted me; that He is also truthful in His promises, and that He is powerful in fulfilling them; for He can do what He wills." Encouraging answer to hope!

Now, Christian souls, Mary is our example of

this firm confidence in God. To many trials was she subjected, and often was she obliged to walk in the most hidden ways of faith; but never did she doubt, never was she discouraged. Especially does she give an example of confiding prayer. Did not her reply to the Angel prove this: "Be it done to me according to thy word?" Did not her Divine Son work His first miracle upon her prayer, before His time had come? At the same time she points out the solid foundation of confidence in the words: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye." (John 2. 5.) Let us follow Mary's example; let us ask her to strengthen our hope by her powerful intercession, and God will grant it.

EXAMPLE.

St. Rose of Lima was, like her mother, naturally very timid. Having on one occasion remained very late at prayer in a little chapel, which she herself had erected in honor of Mary, the ever-blessed Virgin, her anxious mother sought her, but only in company of her husband. On the way home Rose thought to herself: 'How is this? My mother, so timid, does not fear to seek me, when accompanied by my father. And yet his protection is feeble. Should I then fear, since my God is everywhere with me?" Though she never feared anything when at prayer, she was very timid at all

other times, until that evening when reflecting, as stated before. Since then all fear left her. For this, too, was she grateful to God, who had infused this hope of His protection into her heart. Nor did she fail to venerate Mary, who is called "our hope." The little chapel had become her second home; there she adored with all the warmth of her heart her Saviour; there she venerated Mary with all possible zeal. She died in the year 1617.

PRAYER.

O sacred heart of Mary, full of hope; obtain for my poor heart firm, immovable confidence, that in all dangers of body and soul I cast myself into the arms of my God; that I walk tranquilly and trustingly like a child at the hand of my heavenly Father, through all adversities of life, and that in my prayers I may never doubt; but full of hope leave all to His Divine pleasure. Amen.

SIXTEENTH DAY OF MAY.

PRAYER FOR ARDENT CHARITY IN THE ROSARY.

In the rosary-devotion, Christian souls, we also pray that our love be inflamed. As the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, so (could we say) is the third divine virtue—charity, the result of the other two—faith and hope, is their soul, their life; for without charity, faith and hope are dead. "And now," says St. Paul, "there remain faith, hope and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." (I. Cor. 13. 13.) Though great be the power of faith and hope, though great be the necessity of faith and hope in working out our salvation, and reaching our eternal destiny, charity is still greater, it being the consummation of every meritorious virtue, the power of all good proving itself stronger than death and hell, the very life of all good; for St. John tells us: "He that loveth not, abideth in death." (I. John 3. 14.)

What, then, is charity as a divine virtue?—Charity is a virtue infused by God, by which we love God above all things, and our neighbors as ourselves. How sublime a virtue! What the brilliant

sun is among the innumerable heavenly planets and stars, that is charity among all Christian virtues, they receiving from it their splendor and their merit. By this virtue we esteem God higher than anything in the world, so that we would rather lose all, even life itself, than offend God; by it we also nourish an inclination of our hearts to God, preferring Him to all other objects worthy of love; by it we love God for Himself alone, and all other for His sake and in Him, from whom proceeds everything good and deserving of love.

The end of all virtues is to bring us closer to God; and the better this is effected, the greater is the virtue. Hence the divine virtues, or theological virtues, are greater than the so-called moral virtues, having God for their immediate end, and placing us in closer communion with God. Yet of these divine virtues—faith, hope and charity, the last named is the greatest; for whilst faith and hope comprehend God, inasmuch as He is and as all good proceeds from Him and is to be hoped from Him, charity comprehends Him as He is in Himself—the sublime Good, the sole resting-place of the devout christian soul. Hence charity is the sublimest virtue, because it places us into most intimate union with God, our eternal destiny. Beautifully does St. Francis of Sales remark: "To faith salvation is shown, to hope it is prepared, but to charity alone it is given. Faith points out the way

into the land of promise. . . . . Hope nourishes us with the manna of its loveliness. But charity leads us into the celestial home." How useful, then, the prayer that our charity be inflamed! "Thou mayst have what thou wilt; if thou have not charity, all will profit thee nothing," says St. Augustin, "and if thou have nothing else but this—charity, thou hast fulfilled the law."

O how sublime is this virtue of charity! It places and retains us in most intimate communion with God, makes us partakers, as it were, of divine nature; it renders us like to God, yea, it elevates us to the dignity of children of God, and to all rights and claims thereof, so that resting on this divine love we can most truthfully say: "Our Father, who art in heaven." Indeed, "God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him," says St. John. (I. 4. 16.)

But, Christian souls, bear also in mind, that charity is the foundation of life, the consummation of every perfect virtue. The soul from which this charity is expelled, loses also the life and merit of every other virtue unto eternal reward. How precise does the great Apostle of the gentiles teach this! "If I speak with the tongues of men," he says, "and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should

have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (I. Cor. 13. 1-3.) If, then, martyrdom for the sake of one's holy faith—the most heroic act which a Christian can perform, should lose all merit and sublimity, were it possible to be suffered without love: what value, what merit will other inferior virtues then retain, if they be not animated and accompanied by love?" Surely none whatsoever. Charity is the life of the soul, remarks St. Thomas Aquinas; all other virtues, how excellent they may be, impart without love no more life, than a dead body ceases to be dead, when it would be adorned with gold and diamonds.

But, although no other virtue perfect in itself and meritorious for heaven, is possible without charity, it is still wherever really existing, accompanied by all other virtues, thus proving itself to be the queen of all virtues. This, St. Paul again teaches, when continuing the above passage in the words: "Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up. Is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things,

endureth all things." (I. Cor. 13. 4-7.) What plainer words do we desire? Does not St. Paul teach, in these words, that charity is the root, the life of all virtues? And St. Augustin calls charity "the castle of all virtues . . . . the highest reward of the saints in heaven."

Considering all this seriously, is our prayer in the rosary-devotion that our love be inflamed, useless? Most assuredly not. On the contrary, let us furthermore reflect, in order to obtain still more ardent love, that God has loved us first, before we could love, that He has loved us to such an extent as to sacrifice His dearly-beloved Son upon the cross for our salvation, that He has given and will give us innumerable proofs of His love to us, for all that we have and are, we have received from the loving Father-hand of God; that God even demands this love of us, and attaches such importance to it as to make our salvation depend upon it. Should it be necessary that we be encouraged and commanded to love God? We love them who show us a favor, who offer us a present, who assist us in adversity; what shame to us, if we neglected to love God who has created all for our good, who has given us His angels as protectors, His only Son as our Redeemer, and after so many bodily and spiritual blessings has promised us life everlasting? Should we not exclaim with the royal Psalmist: "What shall I render to the Lord, for

all He has rendered to me?" and answer: My love, my heart, and thus realize the words of Holy Writ: "Son, give me thy heart?" Or should we not frequently say with St. Philip Neri: "O my God, Thou art so amiable, and commandest me to love Thee! Why didst Thou give me but one heart, such a small heart?" Yea, let us love God with our whole heart, with our whole soul, with our whole mind, and with all our strength. Let us prove our love by a virtuous life; for Christ himself says: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them; he it is that loveth me." (John 14. 21.)

Nor let us forget that the same God who demands our love for Himself, also commands us: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Here, then, we have from the lips of Christ what we should do. We shall extend our love to our neighbor as to ourselves. Yea, we cannot even love God, unless we love our neighbors; for St. John says: "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother: he is a liar." (I. 4. 20.) With true love to God let us unite true love to our neighbor. Let us love Him as we would love ourselves.

We may rest assured, that Mary, the ever-glorious Virgin, is the best model of love to God; that next to the heart of Jesus there was never a heart burning so ardently with love to God, than Mary's heart. She was full of grace; and love to God is the greatest grace. She was the beloved daughter

of the heavenly Father, the dear Mother of the amiable Saviour, the chosen spouse of the Holy Ghost, and being so exceedingly loved by the Triune God, she reciprocated this divine love every day of her life in the most exemplary manner. But she is also our Mother; and therefore she must also be our example in loving our neighbor. She extends her maternal love and care to all mankind; so should we love all men without exception and prove our love by our actions. Mary is, indeed, "the Mother of divine love," as our holy Church calls her. Let us, then, always beseech her in the rosary to obtain for us an ardent love.

EXAMPLE.

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi frequently entered into a kind of ecstasy when meditating upon the love of God, expressed principally in the work of redemption, and seized by the flame of heavenly love she exclaimed: "O God of love! O God of love! The love which Thou, my Jesus, bearest to men, is exceedingly great." Then she would turn to her sisters in religion and say: "Do you not know, dear sisters, that my Jesus is nothing else but love? O, that the whole world would hear my voice, so that the love of Jesus would be known and loved by all." She was also a great venerator of Mary, "the Mother of beautiful love."

The convent in which she lived was, to her great delight, under the protection of the blessed Mother of God. When she was to make her vows, she was sick. She had her sisters carry her to the altar of Mary, and there in sight of the Queen of heaven and amid many tears she consecrated herself entirely to her Saviour Jesus by the solemn vows. She lived fifty-two years in the most zealous service of God and His holy Mother.

PRAYER.

O sacred heart of Mary, impart to my cold heart a few sparks of thy ardent love, that like thee I may love God above all and my neighbor as myself; that I may seek nothing but the fulfillment of His holy will, and, like thee, be ready to make every sacrifice that this love may demand of me. Amen.

SEVENTEENTH DAY OF MAY.

THE FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY: THE ANNUNCIATION.

Now, Christian souls, we arrive at the last component part of the rosary—the mysteries, added to every decade. As you know the whole rosary contains fifteen mysteries. But, more frequently, the small rosary (five decades) is recited according to the season of the year;—the joyful mysteries from Advent until Septuagesima;—the sorrowful mysteries from Septuagesesima until Easter;—the glorious mysteries from Easter until Advent. And how appropriate are these mysteries? With Mary, and in the spirit of Mary, we hear the annunciation,—we accompany Mary to her cousin Elizabeth,—we adore with Mary the new-born Saviour of the world,—we offer and seek Him with Mary in the temple;—we pass through the stages of His suffering with Mary;—we salute Him in His glory with Mary, and we praise her whom He has received and crowned Queen of heaven. Indeed, what prayer is more holy, more sanctifying than the rosary?—Yet let us consider each of these mysteries in succession and draw from each a particular lesson.

In the first joyful mystery, we reflect upon the annunciation of the incarnation of the Son of God; or: "Jesus, whom thou didst conceive of the Holy Ghost." These words, Christian souls, contain the beginning of the great work of redemption; they teach us that Christ Jesus, the Son of the eternal God, and God himself, became man, in a miraculous and supernatural manner; that is to say: He, the Word, that was in the beginning, and that was with God, and that was God, assumed our human nature by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, to be born of this virginal Mother, and to appear in the course of time as the Saviour of fallen mankind. Hence, we profess by the annunciation of this mystery, that Jesus Christ, God forever, became man in the course of time. This ineffable mystery St. John announces in these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God, and the Word. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: (and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." (John 1. 1-14.)

When the time had arrived, which God, according to his all-wise decree, had appointed for the salvation of the fallen human race, the time so ardently desired by the Patriarchs and so often foretold by the Prophets, He sent His Angel Ga-

briel to a Virgin whose name was Mary, announcing to her that she was chosen to be the Mother of the Saviour. "Hail, full of grace," said the heavenly messenger, "the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women. . . . Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High." But how shall this be done, asks the Virgin? I know not man; I am a virgin, and desire to remain a virgin. "The Angel, answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Hereupon Mary gave her consent, replying: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." (Luke 1.) And in the same moment, Christ Jesus, the Son of God, descended from on high into the Virgin's womb, assuming human nature,—body and soul like man. "And the Word was made flesh," that is: the Word was made man. At that very moment the body of Christ was formed in her womb by the power of God, and the soul of Christ united with it, so that being also the second person of the most blessed Trinity, Christ conceived by the Holy Ghost in Mary, is true God and true man. What a stupendous mystery!—"To-day He who

was before all times, is conceived in the course of time," exclaims St. Chrysostom, "and although according to His nature, He is immutable, He is still become what He was not, since He became man without being anything of that which He is as God."

But, Christian souls, what humility is noticed in this mystery?—God descends from His throne of glory, into this valley of tears and misery;—God who is adored by all celestial spirits, comes among men who would not receive Him;—God, the infinite Majesty, has laid aside His greatness, or as St. Paul says: "Debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man." (Phil. 2. 7.) God, the most Holy, assumes the form of sinful flesh—What humility! Verily, a great lesson for us proud creatures. By this He points out the truth of His words: "I am . . . humble of heart."

And what honor is conferred on Mary? She consenting to the will of God, made known to her by the Angel, replied: "Be it done to me according to thy word." And therefore God exalted her most wonderfully, since His divine Son chose her body to be His throne, adorning it above all others, with most excellent gifts and graces. "She alone has merited to bear the God-man in her womb," says St. Augustin, "to bring Him forth and to serve Him as a throne and a palace." He elevated

her in preference to millions of her sex, to be his Mother, so that she, gratefully acknowledging His great deeds, exclaims in the Magnificat: "He that is mighty hath done great things to me: and holy is His name." (Luke 1. 49.) And what honor to be the Mother of God? "Could God have exalted her more," asks St. Bernard. "And is she, though according to nature like other human beings, not exalted above all angels and men?"— Indeed a mystery of divine love and humility, and of glory to Mary!

But, Christian souls, what shall we learn of Mary, when reflecting upon this mystery? Mary has given us a lesson of piety and humility, which we should endeavor to follow. According to general representations the Angel found Mary engaged in prayer. And what was the object of her prayer? The coming of the promised Messiah. All devout persons of the Old Law desired this most ardently; and the saintlier they were, the greater was their longing for the Messiah. But Mary surpassing all in saintliness, surpassed them also in her desire for the Saviour. Her prayer, her labor, her suffering had principally this in view: to assist in hastening His advent. In her childhood she entered the temple to serve God. There she prayed most fervently for the coming of the Saviour. At last the Angel announced to her the inscrutable decrees of the most High, that she was

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the chosen Mother of God. Resigned to the will of God she replied: "Be it done to me according to thy word."

Prayer has a wonderful power; it has drawn the Incarnate of the Father down upon this earth. Only the most fervent prayer could effect this. Hence we should pray often and devoutly, that thereby we may open the treasures of grace and blessings of the heavenly Father, and receive the full benefit of Christ's work of redemption. Prayer must prepare our hearts for the reception of God's favors. Pray without interruption is, therefore the Apostle's advice. Like Mary, we should pray that God may come spiritually into our hearts.

We shall learn to be humble. Mary was chosen to be the Mother of God. No one can comprehend this dignity, because no one can comprehend the majesty of God. She was preferred to millions of her sex. Upon her alone the most blessed Trinity looked as the Mother of the Saviour. Did she become proud? Did she regard herself better or greater than others?—Hear her own reply to the Angel: "Behold, the hand-maid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." And again: "My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour. Because He hath regarded the humility of His hand-maid." (Luke 1. 46–48.)

In these words the blessed Mother of God re-

veals the source, from whence arises God's pleasure in man. We must be humble. Above all does God despise the proud. Pride is an abomination in His sight, and many are the trials and sufferings sent by Him to break down the pride and conceit of mankind. We must be humble; because we are in the service of a God who has humbled Himself so much in the mystery of the Incarnation; we must be humble, because we are children of Mary who has practised this virtue; we must be humble, because we of ourselves are nothing, all that we are and have, is from God. "Behold the hand-maid of the Lord," said Mary. —Behold thy most humble servant, O Lord; behold thy unworthy child, O Lord; behold me, poor sinner, O Lord; so should each of us exclaim, and God will regard our humility. And when the Angelus-bell calls us to prayer, let us remind ourselves of the Incarnation, let us think of what took place at Nazareth, let us fall down and adore the incarnate Son of God; for the Angel announced it to Mary, the hand-maid of the Lord, and "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

EXAMPLE.

Blessed Jane of France, daughter of King Louis XI., often read the narration of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ with profound reverence, and only

amid tears did she close the sacred Scriptures as often, as she had read and meditated upon it. At the same time she was drawn so forcibly by the sublime virtues which Mary, the ever-blessed Virgin, manifested at the salutation of the Angel, that she founded an order under the title of the Annunciation, which confirmed by several Popes spread with great approbation and blessing. The rules of the order were founded principally upon the virtues of the holy Mother of God, namely: constant faith, firm hope, ardent love, angelic purity, profound humility, punctual obedience, glowing devotion and piety, and Christian prudence. Jane herself gave the most beautiful example of these virtues to her sisters in religion. Therefore she was also favored by special graces from Jesus and Mary, whose zealous venerator she was until death in the year 1504.

PRAYER.

Replenish us, O holy Mother of God, with the liveliest sentiments of gratitude for the coming and incarnation of Jesus Christ. Daily will I recite the Angelic salutation with the greatest devotion; assist thou me to draw from thence the grace of always making one step farther in the devotion of thy spirit and in the humility of thy heart that I may love ever more the mystery of the incarnation. Amen.

EIGHTEENTH DAY OF MAY.

THE SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY: THE VISITATION.

The mystery of eternal love is now realized. In the very moment, in which Mary consented to the Angel's message, saying: "Behold the hand-maid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word," she is become the Mother of God. She now bears in her virginal womb Him who by the word of His Omnipotence bears this vast universe. But although visited herself in such a wonderful manner, she still hastens to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who also had been blessed in a special manner, and to bring blessings unto her from Him who now rests beneath her loving heart. This visit is represented to us in the second joyful mystery.

"Jesus, whom thou didst carry in thy womb on thy visit to Elizabeth." From the gospel of St. Luke, chapter 1, verse 38, we learn that after the Angel had completed his mission, he departed from the house of the blessed Virgin. "And Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill-country, with haste, unto a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth." Why did the blessed Mother of God make this

visit? She had learned from the Angel, that her cousin Elizabeth, had also conceived in her old age. She paid the visit not mistrusting the words of the heavenly messenger. Not like the first Eve, did Mary doubt, and thus lose God; but she, the second Eve, believed and gains God, merits the dignity to become the Mother of God, so that at her entrance Elizabeth exclaims: "Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? . . . . . Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." She visited her cousin upon divine inspiration, believing that God had His particular intentions, as really was the case. "Behold," said Elizabeth, "behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy." Why? Because in that moment the infant was sanctified. "We should rejoice and thank the benevolent God," remarks the venerable Peter Canisius, "that Christ, ... as yet unborn, hastens to begin the work of the true Messiah on earth, and to move and compel His Mother to sanctify the son of the sterile Elizabeth."—The infant leaped for joy; because in that moment it is freed from original sin, is filled with the love of God and rejoice in the Holy Ghost. Elizabeth, too, was filled with the Holy Ghost, so that she, enlightened by Him, perceives the mystery of the Incarnation of God,

wherefore "she cried with a loud voice: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." What blessing has this visit brought upon this house? The revelation of the sublime mystery of the Incarnation! The sanctification of the unborn infant! The veneration of the blessed Mother of God!

Reflect, furthermore, Mary went with haste. Her great love to her venerable cousin prompted her to hasten and to render her those services necessary in that particular condition. What a beautiful trait of the blessed Virgin! Though she herself had conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, she leaves her home, abandons the comforts she now required, hastens over a long journey, disregards the hardships of a toilsome, painful road,—over mountains, she—the Mother of God, does this to assist an ordinary mother, what love and humility! "Mary who was accustomed to remain secluded in her chamber," says St. Ambrose, "was not kept from the road by her virginal timidity, not from her zeal by the ruggedness of the hills, not from her service by the hardships of the journey."

Lastly, reflect also upon the benevolence which the Mother of God practised, the good wishes, which she manifested to her cousin. Her visit points out to us what friendship and what love should exist among relatives, and with what sym-

pathy they should share each other's fortune or misfortune. The happiness enjoyed by one should be the common property of all—this the ties of nature, of relationship demand; so also must misfortune or adversity be looked upon as affecting all, and therefore be mitigated by all as far as possible. "Even the Saints do not cease to love their relatives, and to come to their assistance in need," says St. Gregory, the Great. How happy was Elizabeth, because Mary was so highly favored by God; "blessed art thou among women." And in turn, how desirous was Mary of bestowing favors upon Elizabeth, of assisting her now, in days of particular need and comfort? "Having heard by the mouth of the same Angel," remarks St. Francis of Sales, "that her cousin Elizabeth had conceived a son in her old age, she (Mary) wished to pay her a visit, in order to proffer her services to her during this time." She realized what St. Gregory expresses in the words: "We must assist also those who stand nearer to us, in temporal matters before others, just as the flame will ignite those objects first that are closest to it."

Yet, let us not forget, Mary did not ascribe this praise, this honor to her own merits; humbly she gave all glory to God. She remained silent as to the wonder done to her, by the Almighty, for a time; but noticing that Elizabeth had been instructed as to her state by the Holy Ghost, her

soul wings her course to heaven, and her spirit rejoices in God. "Thou," said she to Elizabeth, according to the words of St. Bernard, "Thou praisest the Mother of God; but my soul praises the Lord. Thou saidst the infant leaped for joy in thy womb at the voice of my salutation; but my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour." Mary exclaimed: "My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour." Not in herself does she glory, but in God, "because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid." And being now the Mother of Him who is adored by all celestial spirits, she on this account foretells her own praise; "for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty, hath done great things to me: and holy is His name. And His mercy is from generation unto generation, to them that fear Him. He hath showed might in His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath received Israel, His servant, being mindful of His mercy. As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed forever." (Luke i. 46–54.) What gratitude of Mary to the Most High! And a gratitude proceeding from her profound humility! "The motive of her gratitude," says St. Ambrose,

"was none else than her perfect conviction, that the grace of which she partook, was not imparted to her on account of merit that she possessed, but was the effect of God's kindness."

Now, Christian souls, Mary once visited her cousin Elizabeth, bearing with her Jesus, the source of all blessing and grace. She will also visit us, provided we have our hearts prepared for her coming. Mary believed the words of the heavenly messenger; she was blessed; all things came to pass which were spoken to her by the Lord. So, also, must we believe, if at all we desire God's blessings. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," says St. Paul. "For he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him." (Heb. 11. 6.) Learn from her example to please God, and to be rewarded. You must believe and seek Him; yea, so certain is this that Christ said: "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." (Matth. 21. 22.)

Mary was blessed, because she did the will of God; Elizabeth was blessed by this visit for serving God. If you do the will of God, Christ will also come to you; He will visit you, for then you are His brother, His sister. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, that is in heaven," says Christ, "he is My brother, and sister, and mother." (Matth. 12. 50.) Together with faith,

therefore, good works are demanded,—the performance of the Divine will. Mary did this. She believed firmly; but she also performed a good work by visiting her cousin. So should our hearts be filled with love to our fellow-men, without distinction; we should be willing to lend them a helping hand at all times, but especially in time of need or sickness; and the benevolent Father will not fail to bless us; for Christ himself plainly says: "Whatsoever you have done to the least of my brethren, you have done to me." How highly does God esteem charitable works to our fellow-men! Learn, therefore, to believe, to do God's will and to perform good works, and God's blessing will always rest upon you.

EXAMPLE.

St. Mary of Oignies loved prayer so much that she practised it even at night-time. Upon the wish of her parents she married; but by her constant prayer she obtained also for her husband the grace of living in virginal purity. Thereupon they devoted themselves to the care of the poor sick. In order to strengthen themselves against the scoff and mockery of the worldly-minded people, they meditated upon the bitter passion of Jesus Christ. Mary, moreover, was filled with the tenderest devotion to the blessed Virgin. She was

accustomed to make two pilgrimages every year, and walked bare-footed over snow and ice in the severest winters without injuring herself. She recited many prayers in honor of the blessed Mother of God; she fasted austerely; she scourged herself and offered the sufferings to God and the blessed Virgin. But especially did she love to visit the sick, as did the blessed Virgin to Elizabeth. She often sang the Magnificat in honor of the Mother of God. It was her last song before her death in the year 1213.

PRAYER.

Change my proud heart, O blessed Virgin Mary, by thy powerful intercession that I may become humble, grateful to God and eager to serve my fellow-men. Obtain also for me a better will of assisting, especially those who are in need of help, through love of God, so that thus I may perform the will of God and receive an eternal reward. Amen.

NINETEENTH DAY OF MAY.

THE THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY: THE NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

No doubt, the visit of the blessed Mother of God to Elizabeth was a source of indescribable blessings. But now the time foretold by the prophets had arrived, in which the most bountiful and most gracious blessing should be bestowed upon the whole human race. "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art not the least among the thousands of Juda; out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be the Ruler in Israel, and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity." (Mich. 5. 2.) There, at Bethlehem, the most auspicious birth of the Saviour took place; there the sublime mystery, mentioned by St. John: "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," was realized; and the memory of this blissful mystery we celebrate in the third joyful mystery of the holy rosary.

"Jesus, who was born of thee at Bethlehem." This is the most joyous and remarkable event in the history of the world,—the birth of the Son of God,—conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. In those days peace and tran-

quility reigned supreme over the known world, verifying the prophecies of old, and making a worthy reception of Him whom Isaiah called: "the prince of peace." Cæsar Augustus decreed that the whole world should be enrolled. Joseph, obeying the imperial decree, "went to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger: because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2. 1–7.) In these few words the Evangelist records the most blessed event,—the sublime mystery of the nativity of the Son of God.

What sublimity and what humility in this mystery! There He is born who was in the beginning with God, and who was God! There He who reigns in glory and majesty, and who is adored by all celestial spirits, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us!"—O, who can comprehend it! The Eternal God is become man! And how was He received? With coldness on the part of mankind. Not as much as a comfortable room was offered Him; "there was no room for them in the inn." Mary, His blessed Mother, was compelled to seek

shelter in a cave used as a stable; there the Son of God appeared as an infant; there, in a cold winter's night, was He born whose burning love to mankind forced Him to leave heaven. Verily, the words of St. John are true: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

What humility of God! He is become an infant, in order to win all for Himself already at His birth. "A child is born to us, and a son is given to us. He is become an infant, in order to show us that true greatness consists in a childlike, humble mind, and in an innocent life.—"A child is born to us!" exclaims St. Ambrose. "It is the Son of God who became a child, that thou wouldst be a perfect man." He is become an infant, in order to infuse into all, confidence and love. For what indeed is more amiable than an infant? We fear, to a certain extent, the mighty ones of the earth, we tremble in their presence; but a sweet infant, all, even the most timid, will approach. This we notice in the shepherds. When the Angel stood by them, they feared. And the Angel said to them: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." Having heard this they took courage and said one to another: "Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word which is come to pass, which the Lord hath

showed to us. And they came with haste: and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger. And seeing they understood the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child." Happy shepherds, who saw face to face the Saviour of the world!

Though cast out by mankind, though born in abject poverty, in a stable, in a cold winter's night, the Saviour was glorified by angelic choirs. "Glory be to God on high, on earth peace to men of a good will," sang the heavenly spirits. Though disregarded by the more fortunate inhabitants, He was visited and adored by the poor shepherds. What comfort must this have been to His blessed Mother? What praise is also bestowed upon her? The mother partakes of the honor shown to the child. Mary is also honored by these heavenly visitors. We say, and the same shall be repeated unto the end of times, to her glory, "Jesus . . . . born of the Virgin Mary." She, the Mother of this Divine Infant at Bethlehem, was indeed a virgin, a spotless, undefiled virgin. Such was she called by the prophet, such by the evangelist; and to remain a virgin she was assured by the heavenly messenger:—she was to become a Mother, and still remain a Virgin,—all through the power of Him, with whom nothing is impossible. Her infant was to be adored,—it being God; she was to be honored,—she being the virginal Mother of

God. We cannot think else, on account of God's infinite majesty, but that His Mother was a spotless Virgin before, at and after the birth. Hence, St. Augustin also says: "When we say in the symbol of faith: Born of the Virgin Mary, we must believe with candid faith, that Mary, the Mother of God, conceived as a virgin, brought forth as a virgin, and remained a virgin after birth." And such is the tradition of the whole church.

Let us also remember, that the Saviour was born in the darkness of night, representing the darkness of heathenism, error and sin, which could be expelled only by Jesus—the true light. Of Him, St. John says: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men: and the light shineth in darkness." (John 1. 4. 5.) He was born in the darkness of night,—representing that without Him, without the light of His divine grace, we are unable to do anything meritorious for heaven, for life everlasting, as He afterwards also said: "Without me you can do nothing." (John 15. 5.) He was born in a stable, in the greatest poverty and need, although He could have appeared with divine power and majesty. "This shall be a sign unto you," said the Angel; "you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger." (Luke 2. 12.) Swaddling-clothes, manger, stable,—all His earthly possessions,—why such poverty? To teach us, on the one hand, to

love poverty and to despise the vain possessions of the world, or, as St. Bernard remarks: "He (Christ) has chosen the stable in order to express thereby His contempt of the world's glory, His condemnation of its vanities;" on the other, to infuse confidence and trust into the poor of this earth, that they may not despair; for He is become poor like to them."

Now, Christian souls, what great lessons does this mystery contain? Humility and meekness. God has humbled himself to such a degree as to become like unto us except in sin; Mary, His dear Mother, humbled herself with Him. They did not resent the bad treatment of the inhabitants; but meekly they went their way to an old stable. Let us follow His advice: "Learn of me; for I am meek and humble of heart."—Jesus was born in abject poverty. Mary, His poor but loving Mother, being denied an entrance in the inn, sought shelter out in a stable, in a dark night, exposed to the cold blasts of winter. What poverty! At such times the most indigent mother can give more to her infant than Mary; she finds help from neighbors,—not so Mary. Let us learn therefrom to be content with what little we may possess; let us not murmur in our poverty; God did not deign to give His beloved Son more,—why should we complain? And if we are blessed with temporal goods, let us not be hard-hearted, like the Bethle-

hemists, to our poor fellow-men, but let us give them from our abundance; for God loveth a cheerful giver. Of us, to whom much is given, much will be demanded; and with what measure we mete, with the same shall it be measured unto us. The day may come, when perhaps we too must beg of the charity and benevolence of others. Mary, Joseph and Jesus are satisfied with what little they have. Let us be resigned to the will of our heavenly Father who well knows, and will give us all that we need. Let us glorify God in all, as did the Angels, and hasten to adore God at all times, as did the poor shepherds of Bethlehem.

EXAMPLE.

St. Francis of Assissi was a zealous servant of Jesus and Mary. He endeavored principally to acquire their virtues. As Jesus already at His birth manifested the virtue of love and poverty, Francis followed His example. He distributed all his property among the poor through love of God. To increase his love of poverty he reflected upon nothing more than upon the poor, helpless Infant and His Mother in the stable at Bethlehem. This Divine Infant became poor for our sake, and Mary, His loving Mother, shared with Him this pressing poverty. Then meditating thus, and especially on the feast of the nativity of Jesus, streams

of tears would roll over his countenance. In order to encourage the people to a like meditation he, with the Pope's permission, erected a crib to symbolize the nativity of Jesus Christ. There he would preach with such fervor upon the love of this poor, divine Infant, as to move all his hearers to return this love. This custom of erecting a crib spread abroad and exists to the present time.

PRAYER.

O blessed and already suffering Mother of my Saviour, let me partake of thy joy and thy suffering. There at the crib help me to obtain the grace to bear poverty, affliction and sufferings patiently, to renounce this treacherous world and to despise its vanities. Teach me to be ever resigned to the will of God until my death. Amen.

TWENTIETH DAY OF MAY.

THE FOURTH JOYFUL MYSTERY: THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

In the Old Testament there existed a law, in virtue of which every Jewish mother was unclean after the birth of a child, and was obliged to submit, after a specified time, to an ecclesiastical purification. After forty days had elapsed since the birth of a male child, or eighty days since the birth of a female child, the mother was obliged to enter the temple, bringing with her the infant and a ransom or offering;—"a lamb of a year old for holocaust, and a young pigeon or a turtle for sin. . . And if her hand find not sufficiency" (being too poor,) says the Law, "and she is not able to offer a lamb, she shall take two turtles, or two young pigeons, one for a holocaust, and the other for sin; and the priest shall pray for her, and so she shall be cleansed." (Levit. 12.) Mary, the blessed Mother of God, being a devout Israelite, fulfilled this law, offering the gift of poverty, and presenting her divine Son. This we commemorate in the fourth joyful mystery.

"Jesus, whom thou didst present in the temple."

—"After the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. As it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. And to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." (Luke 2. 22.) Mary complied with this law, directed to all mothers, on account of the stain of sin inherited from the first parents. Was she, therefore, unclean like other mothers in Israel? Was she, therefore, not preserved from all stains at the birth of her Son?—Nothing of the kind. She was pure and undefiled; for where there is no stain, there is no need of purification. He, the incarnate Son of God, the Lord of the law itself, was certainly above the law; how could He, the Most Holy, be obliged to submit, like ordinary children of men, to be ransomed and presented in the temple? Certainly not by necessity, but by way of showing an example did He permit it. And since He is the Most Holy, how could His blessed Mother be defiled by His birth? How could she be obliged to fulfill this law of purification, since she, free from all sin,—a pure, immaculate Virgin, conceived in a supernatural manner, by the power of the Holy Ghost?—As her divine Son wished to give an example of humility; so did she submit

to the law of purification, not on account of being unclean or defiled, but to obey as the humble hand-maid of the Lord, not seeking to be exempt from the general law for mothers. "Grace has elevated Mary above the law," says St. Augustin; but humility has subjected her to the law." Hence, then, it is not uncleanliness, that forced Mary to be purified like other mothers; but we must seek other reasons. And what are they?

The first reason, Christian souls, is mentioned by St. Bernard in the words: "O, most blessed Virgin! thou hast indeed no other reason nor cause for thy purification than the desire to become like to thy divine Son. Or what reason had He to be circumcised? In His circumcision, also, did He desire to be considered as a child of man, like whom He became in all things, except sin; and, therefore, thou also wishest to appear like an other woman, although thou art the blessed among thy sex." She, like her divine Son, desired to obey a law to which she was not subject, in order not to scandalize any one of the non-observance of the law; she submitted in order to be an obedient servant of God, who made this law; she fulfilled the law in order to prove herself again the humble hand-maid of the Lord; for although she was pure in the sight of God, she appeared before men as a woman unclean according to the Mosaic law; she fulfilled the law and was not ashamed of

her poverty offering the smallest gift—a pair of doves, in the house of the Lord. What a beautiful example! Hence, St. Augustin also exclaims: "How humble are her sentiments! And how difficult would it be to find an example of her obedience in sacred history!"

Yet Mary only wished to be conformable to her divine Son and obedient to the laws of God; but she made a great sacrifice, the greatest of a mother —the offering of her own child. "After the days of her purification were accomplished, they (Mary and Joseph) carried Him (Jesus) to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord." This presentation was indeed a sacrifice,—a type of the sacrifice of the the cross. But how vastly different? Here, in the temple, Jesus is carried and presented in the arms of a tender Mother; there, upon Calvary, He is borne upon the arms of a torturous cross. Here, in the temple, Jesus is offered as a gift of the glory of God's people; there upon Calvary, He is made the mark of contempt, blasphemy and persecution. Here, in the temple, Jesus is called "the salvation" by Simeon; there, upon Calvary, He effected this salvation by His bloody death upon the cross. But both presentations,—that in the temple and that upon Calvary, are unmistakable proofs of love. In the temple, Mary's great love made this offering; there, upon Calvary, Christ's boundless love sacrificed Himself for

the salvation of mankind. And how great was Mary's offering? She offered in the temple the consolation of Israel, the salvation of mankind. Simeon, bowed down with the weight of years, just and devout, and enlightened by the Holy Ghost, "took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace. Because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples. (Luke 2. 28–30.) Anna, a prophetess, "spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel." What joy to the blessed Mother of God! But what sorrow, too, must have filled her heart when hearing Simeon's prophecy: "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce?"

Great are the virtues that shine forth in this mystery, great the gift presented; hence our holy church commemorates this presentation, annually on the second of February,—on the so-called: Candlemas-day. On this day wax candles are blessed and carried by the faithful in procession, of which St. Bernard already said: "Two by two the faithful walked, each bearing in the hand a candle that had been blessed by the priest." These candles are blessed and offered in memory of Mary's presentation of the true light—Christ Jesus, whom the aged Simeon called: "A light to the revelation of the gentiles;" and "we take these burning

candles into our hands," as St. Saphronius remarks, "to honor Him who, as the eternal light, has dispelled noxious darkness, and to represent the purity of soul with which we should meet Christ." We honor Mary, who has given us the true light,—Christ Jesus, our merciful Redeemer. What joy to Mary, who was chosen as the only one among her sex able to present to the heavenly Father His beloved Son, and also her Son!

Now, Christian souls, great are the lessons contained for us in this mystery. Humility again we see practised by Jesus and Mary. Obedience we behold rendered to the Most High by Mary; obedience to the very letter of the law, though it was humiliating to her dignity as Mother of God, and to her poverty which compelled her to bring the offering of the poor. Let us learn from this to obey. God is also our Lord; He has given us His laws which demand strict obedience of us, and a faithful compliance with them under all circumstances. He has instituted His church, giving her authority to teach, to guide and to govern us by her precepts. Let us obey, that we may not offend Him by our transgressions, whom Mary offered through obedience in the temple; let us obey and thus make a sacrifice of our own will, that thus we may be enabled to say with Christ: "Not my will be done, but thine."

Mary made an offering according to law, pre-

senting her divine Son. So should we also make an offering of ourselves to Him, who was offered for us. And what little does He ask? "My son, (my daughter,) give me thy heart," He says in holy Scripture. Let us offer our hearts, pure and undefiled by sin, decorated with many virtues and shining in the glorious light of sanctifying grace. Let us remember when beholding or carrying a blessed candle, that in baptism a candle was given us to carry, in order that preserving our baptismal vows, we may like the wise virgins meet the heavenly bridegroom, with the shining light of innocence and purity. And you mothers especially, let your first step out-doors be to the church, and there present your infant to its heavenly Father, thank Him for His kind providence over you and ask a continuance of it for yourselves and for your children.

EXAMPLE.

St. Gertrude was accustomed to meditate upon the mysteries of the life and death of Jesus and His dear Mother Mary. On a certain Candlemas-day she joyful in the Lord, said at the first tap of the bell: "My heart and soul salute Thee, O most amiable Saviour; at the sound of this bell, which announces to us on this day the feast of thy most blessed Mother." And Jesus replied: "At this same sound of the bell my sincerest kindness

knocks at the gate of my divine mercy, in order to obtain pardon for all your sins." "When St. Gertrude complained that on account of ill-health she could not celebrate the feast in the choir, the Lord led her in spirit into a beautiful temple. There she beheld all the events of this mystery and those connected with it. At the close she noticed, how Jesus gave His Mother to understand that He would grant all her petitions. Therefore, Gertrude always manifested special confidence in Mary.

PRAYER.

O Mary, thou didst enter the temple as a joyful Mother; thou hast left it after Simeon's prophecy as a sorrowful Mother. Assist me to thank God joyfully for all blessings received, to obey His holy commands and to make a sacrifice of my own will to Him. Help me to bear all grief, sorrow and afflictions that may accompany me through this life, that hereafter I may enjoy heaven forever. Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF MAY.

THE FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY: THE FINDING IN THE TEMPLE.

When the wise men from the East came to adore the new-born King of the Jews, they inquired of King Herod, where he was born. He assembled the chief-priests and scribes, and being told by them, at Bethlehem, he sent the wise men thither, saying: "Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him; bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him." (Matth. 2. 1.) Herod, however, fearing the loss of his throne, intended to murder the divine infant; therefore the wise men received an answer that they should not return to Herod, but to go by an other way into their country. Joseph, also, was told by an angel, to take the child and his mother, and to fly into Egypt, and to remain there. This he did. And when Herod was dead, he was again told to return into the land of Israel with the child and his mother, and coming, they dwelt in Nazareth. After their return from Egypt they went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn feast of the Pasch, to adore God in the temple.

On one of these occasions, when Jesus was twelve years old, He remained, unknown to Mary and Joseph, in the temple. Missing Him, they sought Him as a lost child and after three days they found Him in the temple. This we contemplate in the fifth joyful mystery.

"Jesus, whom thou didst find in the temple." In the old law we read: "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose." (Deut. 16. 16.) Although this law was binding only to males, we find the ever-blessed mother of God comply with it. Plainly says St. Luke (2. 41.): "And his parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the Pasch." Mary, although not obliged, submitted her child to the law of circumcision and of presentation, and herself to the law of purification through obedience to the divine Law-giver, so did she go, according to a law not binding upon her, to Jerusalem, to offer up her prayers and sacrifice in union with thousands and thousands of faithful Israelites. Not forced by law, but by her own free will she, like all God-loving souls, entered the temple where she had spent her childhood's days, to adore with greater piety and more ardent love her Lord and God. What devotion!

And when Jesus was twelve years old, they—Mary and Joseph, took Him to the temple at the

solemn feast of the Pasch. What a sight! Two chosen ones of God, like whom none before ever prayed in the temple, with the Son of God! O holy house! The divine Son adores His divine Father! With Him His blessed mother, the immaculate Virgin, and Joseph, His holy foster-father. What joy for these holy personages in the temple! But behold, what a sorrowful change!

When the days of the Pasch were over, all returned to their homes. The men went one way, the women an other, until they reached certain stopping places. Mary thought her divine Son to be with Joseph, and was pleased; Joseph believed Him to be with Mary, and was content, thinking the child could not be separated from His mother. Hence it was easy for Jesus to part from them and to remain in the temple. But ah! when Joseph and Mary met, who can describe their feelings! They were pleased and joyful at the thought of Jesus being in one or the other's company;—and now—He is lost. And how easily could He be lost in the vast multitudes that left Jerusalem for their distant homes! What sorrow now occupied their hearts! Jesus, their divine child, lost! Look at a poor mother who has lost her child. Who can picture her grief? Who will not pity her in the loss of her darling? Yet what is an ordinary child in comparison to the

divine child! An ordinary mother to this blessed Mother of God? As vast as is the difference in person, so vastly different, also, is their sorrow at the loss. Yea, many of the holy fathers maintain, that the loss of Jesus was Mary's greatest sorrow, having to bear it without Him, whilst all others she suffered with Him.

May we not suppose that in her anxiety, grief and sorrow Mary went about like the spouse in the Canticle saying: "Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth;" have you seen my beloved child, the darling of my heart? Or could not the thought have entered her mind, that He was taken by spies of Archelaus? Could Herod not have left these orders at his death? Is He perhaps now already dead? Oh! none but the heart of a loving mother can fathom the depths of sorrow at the loss of a child, none but her mind can imagine all that may have befallen it. And should this painful loss be the reward for her zeal for God's glory? Mary felt this sword of sorrow most keenly; yet she did not despair.

Sorrow-stricken, Mary sought Jesus among kinsfolks and acquaintances, and not finding Him she returned to Jerusalem, where after three days found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors. Mary sought him sorrowing. "Son," she said, when she saw Him, "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold thy father and I have

sought thee sorrowing." What joy, what happiness must this occasion have been to the loving Mother of God! To find her Son, to embrace Him, to press Him tenderly to her heart! Her words appear to contain a rebuke; but even if they were, it is the outpouring of a loving mother's heart. To find the child in the house of the Lord,—what happiness! To find Him admired by all for His wisdom and answers,—what pleasure! To find Him doing the will of His Father,—what exceedingly great bliss! And thus Mary found Jesus, her divine Son. "How is it you sought me?" He asked. "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" . . . "And He went down with them to Nazareth: and was subject to them." (Luke 2. —.)

What does this mystery teach us, Christian souls? It teaches us how great a loss it is to us to lose Jesus. Behold Mary in her anxiety and sorrow. Now, by sin we also lose Jesus. Miserable is the heart that has lost Jesus. And how often perhaps have we lost Him by mortal sin, and where is our sorrow for having lost Him? Where the sorrow for having offended Him? Where the detestation of the sins, whereby we lost Him? Where the anxiety to find Him? Alas! where?—O, what a loss do we suffer by sin? We have lost Jesus, our God, and with Him His divine grace, His friendship and pleasure, the right to His kingdom

of heaven, and yet we appear so little affected!—O, shed bitter tears of sorrow at your loss! "Thou weepest over the body, from which the soul is departed; and thou weepest not over the soul which is abandoned by God!" exclaims St. Augustin in great astonishment. More, indeed, should we bewail the loss of God by sin, than the loss of earthly life.

But, if we have had the misfortune of losing Jesus by sin, we are also taught in this mystery how to find Him. Mary did not hesitate to seek Him; sorrow-stricken she returned to Jerusalem, and sought Him until she was blest in finding Him. In like manner should we, if we have lost Jesus by sin, seek Him with bitter tears of sorrow at our sins; we should return to the house of the Lord, and by a good and contrite confession, cleanse our hearts and souls from all stains of our misdeeds, that thus upon the road of penance we may find Jesus, and that through the channel of this holy sacrament of Penance His divine grace may replenish our hearts. David already said of the merciful God: "A contrite and humbled heart thou, O Lord, wilt not despise." He will again receive us; and as He came to Nazareth with His Mother, so also will He come into our hearts.

So much for us poor sinners. But you parents have a particular lesson. Mary and Joseph took Jesus with them into the temple to pray. So

should you be the guides of your children. You should teach them, in early childhood already, to pray and to serve God; you should watch over them; you should admonish them; you should reprove them; but above all, you should give them a good example. O, how responsible are the duties of parents! Out of your hands God will demand the souls of your children. Therefore do, as St. Paul says: "Bring them (your children) up in the discipline and correction of the Lord. (Ephes. 6. 4.) Follow the example of Mary and Joseph.—And you children, remember the words: "Jesus . . . . came to Nazareth; and was subject to them,"—to Mary and Joseph. Be you always subject to your parents; Christ Jesus has given you the example; God has commanded it. Love your parents, honor your parents, obey your parents, assist your parents, that you also may advance in grace with God and man, and enjoy God's blessings on earth and in heaven.

EXAMPLE.

St. Pelagia, an actress of Antioch, led a very extravagant, sinful life, although she had been enrolled among those preparing for baptism. At the time when she lived such a scandalous life in that populous city, a council was held. During the sermon Pelagia glittering with gold and jewels

passed by. The bishops turned away their faces, whilst St. Nonnus fixed his eyes upon her and said: "God according to His infinite mercy will grant mercy to that woman, the work of His hands." She was touched at these words and shed plentiful tears. She wrote a letter to St. Nonnus, who granted her request. In the presence of the bishops she was baptized. Immediately thereupon she divided her jewels and riches among the poor, took the veil and went to Mount Olivet, where she buried herself, as it were, in a cave, and bewailed her sins with most bitter tears. Often she was tempted most severely; but having recourse to Mary, the ever-blessed Virgin, she nevermore lost Jesus by sin until her penitential, holy death.

PRAYER.

O holy Mother Mary, receive me under thy protection, as thou didst thy divine Son. Often have I lost Him by sin; assist me in finding Him again. Often have I disobeyed His holy commandments; but obtain thou for me the virtue of obedience, that I nevermore lose Him on earth, and be with Him forever in heaven. Amen.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF MAY.

THE FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY: THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

The life of our blessed Saviour, Christian souls, was a life of continual suffering. His childhood and youth passed in poverty and all privations usually accompanying poverty. When He had acquired some bodily strength, He did heavy manual labor, helping His foster-father, St. Joseph, at the carpenter's bench. When thirty years of age, He commenced to preach the divine and eternal truths, passing through the lands of Judea, Galilee and Samaria, teaching by day, praying by night, suffering all manner of hardship—all for the salvation of mankind. Yet all this was but the beginning of suffering, of which the severest and most excruciating awaited Him at the close of His earthly career, commencing on Mount Olivet and ending on Mount Calvary. He was indeed "a man of sorrows," as the Prophet calls Him.

On the eve of His bitter passion and death, Christ "sat down and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said to them: With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer."

(Luke 22. 14-15.) And having finished, He instituted the most adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist. Not satisfied in having done so much during His public career for mankind, He knowing that He was about to complete the gracious work of redemption, gave Himself for the spiritual nourishment of the soul, gave Himself as the greatest token of love, gave Himself as our guest unto the end of times. What an incomprehensible love! Having finished this celestial repast, He addressed His apostles again, prayed for them to His heavenly Father, "and going out He went according to His custom to the Mount of Olives," there to begin His bitter passion. Upon this we reflect in the first sorrowful mystery.

"Jesus, who sweat blood for us in the garden.' —"Jesus was followed by His disciples who remained at a distance, whilst Peter, James and John, went on with Him. "He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad. Then He said to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death: Stay you here and watch with me. And going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying and saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matth. 26. 37.)

What a picture, Christian souls! There in the silence of night, in the dark shadow of the olive trees of Gethsemani lies the Son of God, prostrate

upon His face, praying and struggling in bloody agony, caused by the fore-sight of His cruel sufferings, the knowledge of our sins, and the fruitlessness of His passion and death to many, very many sinners. What a pitiful sight! There our Saviour beholds the vile rabble dragging Him from one judge to the other to be mocked and unjustly condemned; there He already beholds the cruel scourges, the painful thorns, the heavy cross, the nails, the agony on the cross; He heard the mockery, the blasphemy, the blood-thirsty cry: "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" This all awaited Him; with it the chalice was filled. Hence He prayed so pitifully: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matth. 26. 39.) Like David, could He now exclaim: "My heart is troubled within me: and the fear of death is fallen upon me. Fear and trembling is come upon me; and darkness hath covered me." (Ps. 54. 5. 6.) So severe was nature's struggle at the sight of the torments that awaited Him, so great the natural fear of that agony and cruel death, that His blood was forced from out of all pores of His body. "And His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground." (Luke 22. 44.) O how terrible!

Add to the fore-sight of His sufferings the sins of the world, which to atone, He is to suffer, as

also the fruitlessness of His sufferings to so many sinners; and who is able to comprehend that agony on Mount Olivet? Before His mind pass the sins of all human beings, so numerous, so malicious, so hideous. Yet they pass not away; they fall and rest upon Him who has been called "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." Clothed, so to speak, in the sins of mankind, He appears before His heavenly Father, —what shame! Borne down under their immense weight, He lies prostrate upon the sin-stained and cursed earth; what pain! Who can enumerate the sins of but one individual? Who can picture their malice, their atrocity? And now add the sins of all mankind,—from the first human being in paradise, till the last at the consummation of the world,—how immense their multitude, how indescribable their heinousness, how insupportable their burden! And this all rested upon the Saviour of mankind! No wonder that "His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground."

Yet what comfort is found in the knowledge that one's sufferings are not in vain? But such knowledge, to a very great extent, was not our Saviour's. He beheld His sufferings so painful and cruel, to be in vain for many, very many sinful creatures; His death was useless, His work of redemption useless to them. This touched His

loving heart most painfully to know, that by so many sinners His love shall not be esteemed, His sufferings not regarded, His graces, merited by Him upon the cross, not employed; that on the contrary they boldly continue to sin, and that therefore heaven purchased at the price of His heart's blood, shall be a total loss to them. This He gives us to understand, when saying to the women of Jerusalem: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." (Luke 23. 28.) His sufferings He regards as nothing; what pains Him most is the knowledge that with so many His passion and death are endured in vain. O ineffable love of our Saviour, all love for us!

And now, Christian souls, where was Mary, the afflicted Mother, during this agony of her divine Son? She was certainly in Jerusalem; for the evangelists relate that many women had followed Him. But it can hardly be supposed that she was on Mount Olivet; for the same evangelists plainly state that He ate the Pasch with His apostles, washed their feet, instituted and administered the holy Eucharist to them, and having said a hymn, went out with them to Mount Olivet. But Mary hearing Him mention what was to come, certainly felt that now the hour prophesied by Simeon in the temple, was come, in which a sword should pierce her maternal heart, that though she did not

behold with corporal eyes His agony, her mind still perceived all. This the holy fathers also believed, saying, that what Christ suffered corporally, Mary suffered spiritually. What sorrow for this afflicted Mother!

What shall we do? We shall frequently contemplate this sorrowful mystery: "Jesus, who sweat blood for us in the garden." What a struggle, what painful visions, what sufferings! And for whom? For us, sinful creatures. "From the moment of His conception," says St. Thomas a Jesu, "until the moment of His death, the Son of God was a man of sorrow." And let us not forget, that our sins were the cause of all His sorrow and suffering. Isaias already said: "Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows." (Isai. 53 4.)

But how ungrateful have we been? Christ accepts the chalice of sufferings; "not my will be done, but thine," He says in prayer to His heavenly Father: "and we, bold sinners, murmur against God, we complain at sufferings, we accuse God of injustice in sending us afflictions, we perhaps even curse and blaspheme in hours of sore trial! O, where are our thoughts? Having committed sin, do we not remember that they must be punished in one or another manner; do we not know that we are deserving of still more, do we not think that even in this God shows His mercy and love

to us? If not, we only increase our guilt by our bad conduct; we call down upon ourselves God's dire punishments; we clamor for His wrath; we render useless the work of redemption; we trample upon God's graces.

O, nevermore let us commit sin; nevermore transgress God's commands; but reflecting upon this sorrowful mystery in the garden, let us accept whatever may come upon us as our desert; let us pray, when the chalice of trial, affliction and suffering awaits us, in the words of our suffering Saviour: "Father, my good, merciful, benevolent, heavenly Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from me; yet not my will, but Thy will be done;" then Christ's agony will comfort and strengthen us, and His passion and death will open unto us the heavenly Jerusalem.

EXAMPLE.

St. Paul of the Cross received a careful training from his devout mother, so that he afterwards admitted: "If I am saved, I owe it in many ways to my mother." When he grew up to be a young man he resolved to work zealously for the salvation of man. He therefore founded on order, which by preaching the bitter Passion of our Lord and of His afflicted Mother, should lead sinners to penance and conversion. This bitter Passion he

made the subject of frequent and particular meditation, so that he wrought then indescribable good by word and by example. He also venerated Mary, the Mother of sorrows, most tenderly. Even in the severest sickness he did not neglect to recite the rosary, always saying: "I wish to say the rosary, as long as I can." The feasts of Mary he celebrated with pleasure; the sorrows of Mary were often the subject of his public speech. Thus he lived as a servant of the suffering Redeemer and of His afflicted Mother, and died in the year 1775.

PRAYER.

O Mary, how sorrow-stricken was thy maternal heart, when thou didst leave thy beloved Son upon His way to cruel suffering and death! By this thy affliction and by thy intercession obtain for me the grace of patience and resignation unto the will of my heavenly Father in all my sufferings until the hour of my death. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY OF MAY.

THE SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY: THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR.

Dreadful were the sufferings which Christ endured on Mount Olivet. No comfort, no help; even doomed, as it were, by His heavenly Father. Thrice He begged of His Father to take away the chalice, and coming after each time to His apostles He found them asleep. "Sleep ye now and take your rest," He said; "behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go: behold he is at hand that will betray me. As he yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the twelve, came and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the ancients of the people. And he that betrayed him, gave them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; hold him fast. And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said: Hail, Rabbi. And he kissed him. And Jesus said to him: Friend, whereto art thou come? Then they came up, and laid hands on Jesus, and held him. (Matth. 26. 45–50.) Hereupon Jesus was led to the high-priest, Caiphas.

Here the Jews sought false witnesses against Him; they spat in His face and struck Him. When morning came He was brought before Pilate, who sent Him to Herod. Here He was again mocked, and being clothed in a white garment, He was sent back to Pilate. The Jews clamored for His blood, though neither Pilate nor Herod found wrong in Him, and Pilate yielded, so that "having scourged Jesus, he delivered Him unto them to be crucified." This, the scourging, we consider in the second sorrowful mystery.

"Jesus, who was scourged for us." Among the ancient nations scourging was a customary punishment. Yet it was inflicted only upon slaves and the meanest malefactors, who were at the same time condemned to death. God had given certain restrictions in regard to scourging. The stripes should not exceed the number of forty, "lest thy brother depart shamefully torn before thy eyes." But, according to the holy fathers, Jesus was scourged after the Roman manner, that is, without measure and with the utmost cruelty.

Now, Christian souls, enter in spirit the court of Pilate. There you behold your Saviour, stripped of His clothing, fastened to a low pillar, His body almost entirely exposed, awaiting the cruel stripes. Remember the inhuman soldiers approach first with rods, striking the doomed man so terribly that every stripe leaves its mark, and His blood

flows down upon the ground. Stripe after stripe until their arms tire, when they are relieved by two others, and thus they continue as long as they please. Again others approach with cords or straps fastened to a rod, and knotted at the end. With full force they swing the scourge, cutting open the skin and lacerating the body. And, finally, others approach, with lashes in the ends of which were fastened little iron stars or hooks. With fearful power these were swung round the body of the unfortunate sufferer, then withdrawn, tearing away large pieces of skin and flesh. O, who can but rightly imagine the cruelty of this punishment! How does it pain to have a bit of flesh torn away by a nail, or cut by some sharp instrument! And now the whole body, even the tenderest parts, struck and lacerated, not once but perhaps, thousands of times, so that no healthy spot is to be found upon it! In vain does the poor sufferer seek to escape the strokes, he is fastened by cords; in vain does he beg for mercy,—these soldiers are heartless, like ferocious beasts they crave for blood, and become more fierce at the sight of blood; and often it has occurred that such unfortunate creatures have expired at the pillar.

And now, Christian souls, this manner of scourging was inflicted upon Jesus, our divine Saviour. How dreadful! These inhuman executioners cover His tender body with numberless

blue strokes, until skin and flesh burst, and the blood oozing from so many wounds, envelops Him, quivering in pain, in the scarlet mantle of blood. Again others swing the lashes so forcibly, that they coil round about His sacred body; others tearing away pieces of skin and flesh, strewing them upon the ground. O how dreadful! From numberless wounds His blood flows down upon and colors the ground round about Him. Terrible are the pains caused by the scourging; inhuman the treatment of the furious soldiers! Verily, the words of the prophet are become true. "From the sole of the foot," says Isaias (1. 6.), "unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein: wounds and bruises and swelling sores: they are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil." And again: "There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness. . . . . Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows." (Isai. 53.)

What terrible pains for that divine body! Like a smith striking with full force upon the anvil, so did the scourges fall upon the Saviour's body, that His blood flowed in streams to the ground, or covered the arms and faces of the executioners. The royal Psalmist already said regarding the Saviour: "The wicked have wrought upon my back; they have lengthened their iniquity." (Ps. 128. 3.) They have indeed increased their iniquity by their diabolical fury, mockery and blasphemy. How

terrible! And according to revelations, sixty men were ordered, turn about, to inflict this inhuman scourging; and Christ received more than six thousand lashes. Where, indeed, is the human mind capable of comprehending the cruelty of this punishment inflicted upon the innocent Saviour? There is none.

And where was Mary, His blessed Mother? Tradition says: she stood within sight of this cruel spectacle. What excruciating tortures to this loving Mother! An ordinary mother risks her life to save her child, and Mary can do nothing. She beholds that tender body, nursed and attended by her, now in the hands of monsters; she sees the stripes, the gashes, the blood flowing profusely to the ground. What must her loving heart have suffered? None, but a tender, loving mother can have a faint idea. She herself once said to St. Bridget: "When standing near my son, I beheld His sacred body scourged to the ribs, so that the bones could be seen. But I suffered most when I saw, that after the scourges were withdrawn, they had penetrated deep into the flesh." Simeon's prophecy is come true: "A sword shall pierce thine own soul."

Now, let us ask ourselves, Christian souls, why our blessed Saviour endured such excruciating pains? St. Bernard tells us: "He desired to appear as a bad servant who was punished by scourg-

ing, in order to suffer punishment in such a manner as man had deserved by becoming a slave of sin." He suffered the cruel scourging at the pillar for our sins. We bind ourselves by sin; He allows Himself to be bound in order to atone for us. We disfigure our souls by sin; He permits Himself to be terribly wounded and lacerated, in order to heal our wounds. What great love of our Saviour! The royal Psalmist says of Him: "They have numbered all my bones," (Ps. 21. 18.) so cruel was the scourging.

And how have we repaid His ineffable love? By base ingratitude, by sins of the grossest kind, —by our numerous sins of the flesh. The holy fathers maintain that Christ Jesus suffered this cruel scourging principally on account of the sins committed against the holy virtue of chastity. And yet, we offend Him so often by these sins,— by our immodest thoughts, by our vile language and songs and jests, by our abominable actions of impurity, by our unchaste desires. O, what Christian, reflecting seriously upon this second sorrowful mystery, will continue in his unchaste career? Will he still hasten onward to the pool burning with fire and brimstone, for such is the lot of the unchaste?—No; nevermore shall we stain our souls by any sin of impurity,—be it in thought, word, action or desire; nevermore shall we renew by these abominable sins those cruel, most inhu-

man, excruciating pains of the scourging. Christ once suffered for us; let His suffering and blood heal us for ever from our wounds; and His blessing shall then be upon us. "Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God." (Matth. 5. 8.)

EXAMPLE.

In her tenth year St. Bridget was once moved most intensely, whilst listening to a sermon upon the Passion of Christ. In the following night she believed to see Jesus, His whole body lacerated by the scourges and entirely covered by wounds. At the same time she thought that she heard a voice saying to her: "Daughter! look upon my wounds!" The good child became frightened and asked: "Ah! who has ill-treated Thee in such a manner?" And the voice replied: "Not only the Jews have done this; all those do the same, who despise my love."—The impression left by this mysterious dream in her heart, could never be removed; and from that time forward the Passion had become the subject of her frequent and very earnest meditations, at which she could not refrain from tears. Of her devotion and love to Mary, the Mother of God, no description could be given. Not for a single moment of her life did she leave this devotion. Hence she was favored

frequently by the blessed Mother of God with revelations. Thus she lived until her holy death.

PRAYER.

O suffering Jesus, who didst endure such pains for me, teach me by the light of Thy holy grace to behold the heniousness of the sins of the flesh, that I may nevermore offend Thee by them. And thou, O afflicted Mother and ever spotless Virgin Mary, obtain for me the grace to live and die in the holy virtue of chastity. Amen.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF MAY.

THE THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY: THE CROWNING WITH THORNS.

It was customary on this festival day for Pilate to release one of the prisoners, whomsoever the people choose. Now among them was Barabbas, a seditious man and murderer. His release the people, instigated by the envious chief-priests and scribes, demanded. "What will you then," asked Pilate, "that I do to the King of the Jews? But they again cried out: 'Crucify Him.' And Pilate said to them: 'Why, what evil hath He done?' But they cried out the more: 'Crucify Him.' So Pilate being willing to satisfy the people, released to them Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified." (Mark 15. 13.) Pilate still thought that he could move the hearts of the Jews, therefore he had Jesus scourged so cruelly, and then desired to send Him away. But no; so blind was the people, so misled, so hard-hearted that after the most inhuman scourging, they still clamored for His blood, who was already wounded, bruised and lacerated so fearfully as to move to pity even a rock. "Crucify

Him, crucify Him," they cried out the more; and Pilate yielded. "Then the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto Him the whole band: and stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him. And platting a crown of thorns they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand. And bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews. And spitting upon Him, they took the reed and struck His head." (Matth. 27. 27.) This, the crowning with thorns, we contemplate in the third sorrowful mystery.

"Jesus, who was crowned with thorns for us." In the 21st Psalm David speaks of the Saviour as saying: "I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men and the outcast of the people. All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn." (Ps. 21. 7. 8.) And this was verified at the crowning with thorns. A devout author remarks that the sufferings caused by the crown of thorns to our blessed Saviour were most terrible; for the thorns penetrated so deep into His head that they entered the brain. How does it pain, when a needle or a nail enters our flesh? What, then, must have been Christ's sufferings, when the crown of thorns, penetrated the head, that most sensitive part of the body?—when not only one thorn, but, as revelations have it, seventy-two thorns pierced the head; and not in one place, but round about the

head, forming a circle of openings, from whence flowed the sacred blood of Jesus in streamlets, covering His face, beard and hair? It was a suffering of longest duration, ending only with His death; for the crown was not removed until after His death; thus paining Him at every touch of His head or of the crown. And what is more cruel still! The soldiers did not place this tortuous crown gently upon his aching head; they pressed it on with their gloved hands and then using the reed as a hammer, struck the crown, that it might penetrate the more deeply. O what torture! "Wait a moment, my soul!" exclaims St. Lawrence Justinian; "consider the intolerable sufferings of thy Saviour; notice the sensitiveness of His tender head; behold how the thorns pierce the scull! Verily, the Lord would have died during the crowning with thorns, had He not preserved His life to suffer more." What a pitiful sight!

Yet, Christian souls, the suffering Saviour is not only forced to endure those bodily pains; but like David, He can say: "All they that saw me, have laughed me to scorn;" "they have added to the grief of my wounds:"—they mocked Him as the King of the Jews. What comfort in sufferings to have the sympathy of others? And what grief to be mocked or ridiculed in misfortune or affliction? And there sits Jesus the eternal King

of heaven and earth, whose dignity is so great that angels serve and adore Him, mocked by a vile rabble! There sits Jesus whose power is so mighty that storms and waves and all elements obey His commands, struck by inhuman soldiers! There sits Jesus whose glory is so indescribable that on Thabor His apostles fell upon their faces, spat upon by miserable creatures. Jesus, so great, so powerful, so glorious;—and now? Treated more disgraceful than the meanest slave. Covered with a dirty mantle, a reed in His hand, a crown of thorns upon His head, He is mocked by those wretches, bowing their knees and crying: "Hail, King of the Jews;" striking His blood-covered countenance, yea, spitting upon Him, to show their diabolical hatred and contempt of Him, who but a very short time before was received with all manifestations of joy. O, the terrible deeds! And yet they were still unsatisfied; they demanded His crucifixion.

Pilate, seeing the deplorable state, to which Christ had been reduced, thought the sight of Him would appease the enraged people, and therefore he led Him covered with blood and wounds, and in His mock-dress of a king, out upon a balcony in the presence of the populace and cried out: "Ecce homo—Behold the man!" Behold, he would say, though innocent, I had Him scourged to please you. Behold the man, not in glory but

covered in ignominy. Behold the man, so weak, so maltreated, that He can live but a short time; I cannot condemn Him. Behold the man; what shall I do unto Him? "Crucify Him, crucify him," is their only cry. What sufferings! What insult! What blood-thirsty feeling!

What blindness covered that unfortunate people? They even demanded His blood to be upon them. "Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing: but that rather a tumult was made: taking water washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it. And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and upon our children." (Matth. 27. 24. 25.) How was this blood revenged but few years after Christ's death in the terrible destruction of Jerusalem!

But "what doth it profit to blame the thorns?" asks St. Augustin. "Our sins, our wicked thoughts were the cruel thorns, that wounded the head of Jesus Christ." When Jesus, crowned with thorns, once appeared to St. Theresa, she pitied Him; but the Lord said to her: "Do not pity me on account of the wounds caused by the thorns of the Jews; no, pity me on account of the wounds which the sins of Christians cause me." And now, Christian souls, ask yourselves: have not you also struck such wounds to Christ? Have not you also joined that vile rabble in mocking and abusing

Christ by your sins? Like the crown of thorns covering the head of Jesus, so does sin cover the soul of man, wounding it, lacerating it, robbing it of all its beauty; like the thorn-bush, man was barren of all good on account of his sins. To remedy this, Christ suffered the crowning with thorns. "We were thorny and barren," exclaims St. Jerome, "Therefore Christ was crowned with thorns, that we may bear the fruit of a good tree." Have you not crowned your souls with the thorns, as Christ called them, of cares, riches and pleasures of the world? Are you not so attached to the world as to have no mind for things spiritual and eternal, as to believe to possess in it your heaven on earth, as to prefer it to anything sacred and heavenly?—And the pride of life? Do you not consider yourselves better than others, or look upon them with contempt? Are you not vain in dress, imitating all foolish and unbecoming fashions? Do you not concentrate all your thoughts upon the manner how you can please? And lastly, do you not stain your minds with impure, lascivious thoughts and shameful reflections? Behold, for these and all sins that arise principally in the mind, Christ suffered that cruel crowning with thorns. To atone for the pride of mankind Christ was crowned and mocked; or as St. Augustine remarks: "God has humbled Himself, in order that the pride of the human race may not

consider it beneath its dignity to follow His footsteps." Look therefore frequently upon the thorn-crowned Saviour in His humiliation. "Look upon your divine Saviour," says St. Francis of Sales, "how He permits himself to be clothed in a fool's-garb without resistance in the house of Herod, and implore Him that you may obtain true humility and holy denial of yourselves." Learn to be humble and pure in body and soul.

And what must have been Mary's sufferings? When she saw her divine Son led out before the people with the cry: "Behold the man?" When, although near certain death, humanly speaking, they still clamored for her Son's blood? We cannot comprehend her suffering, since we cannot fathom her love to Jesus. Let us, however, follow her example in loving Jesus, and we shall, then, never crown Jesus by our sins, nor renew His sufferings which were shared spiritually by Mary.

EXAMPLE.

St. Catherine of Sienna was once very much dejected at a false report spread abroad about her, when the divine Saviour appeared to her, holding in his right hand a golden crown adorned with jewels, and in the left a crown of thorns and said: "Beloved daughter! It is necessary that you be crowned at different times with both these crowns.

Choose one of the both; but look to it, whether thou wilt be crowned in this present life with the crown of thorns, and in the next life with the golden crown." The holy virgin replied: "Lord, I have denied my will long ago, and therefore will only, what Thou wilt. . . . But yet, if Thou wilt that I answer, I confess earnestly that in this life I always choose to be like and conformable to Thy sacred passion." Having said this she took the crown of thorns out of the hands of the Saviour, and pressed it with such force upon her head, that for a long time she felt the pains caused by the thorns.

PRAYER.

How should we dare to complain, O Mother of sorrows, at the thorny path of sufferings in this life, since thy divine Son was so cruelly tortured by the crown of thorns! We have deserved it by our sins of thought and pride. Assist us to bear all patiently and in a penitential spirit. Amen.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF MAY.

THE FOURTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY: THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS.

We have reflected, though briefly, upon the terrible sufferings of the scourging at the pillar, as also upon the crowning with thorns. This Pilate had ordered and permitted, in the hope that the people, seeing Jesus reduced to such a pitiful state, would abandon their cruel intention of crucifying Him, and demand His release. But how was he disappointed? The Jews, noticing Pilate's intention of releasing Him, cried out: "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend." Having heard this, Pilate sat down in the judgment-seat, and about the sixth hour, he said to the Jews: "Behold your king." But they cried out: "Away with him, away with him, crucify him." Once more Pilate asked them: "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief-priests answered: "We have no king, but Cæsar." Then therefore he delivered Him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him forth. And bearing His own cross He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha.

(John 19. 12.) This, the carrying of the cross, we consider in the fourth sorrowful mystery.

"Jesus, who carried His cross for us." At last Pilate delivered up the innocent Lamb of God to the fury of the wolves, that they may do with Him as they pleased. Though his wife warned him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just man," he was prevailed upon by the Jews accusing him of not being a friend of Cæsar, should he release Christ. He consented to the crucifixion. Now some hasten to take from Jesus the soldier's mantle, and to put on Him His own garment, in order that, as St. Ambrose remarks, "Jesus may be recognized by His garment; since His beautiful countenance was so badly disfigured by blood and wounds, that He could hardly be recognized without His own garment." Others prepare the tools and instruments for crucifixion, whilst others again bring the heavy cross. And what a burden was this cross! According to reliable authority, the upright beam measured fifteen feet high, the cross-piece about seven to eight feet, whilst the breadth and thickness of the wood was about or near one foot. Imagine the weight of this cross! And this cross to be carried by one weakened unto death! Yet "Jesus waits not until the executioners place it upon His shoulder," as St. Thomas of Villanova says; "but He grasps it, embraces it with an ardent desire, and places it upon His

wounded shoulder. Come, He exclaims, come, beloved cross! For three and thirty years I have longed for thee; I embrace thee, and press thee to my heart; for thou shalt be the altar upon which I will sacrifice my life for the salvation of my sheep." O what love! What excessive, burning love of the suffering Saviour!

"Jesus, who carried His cross for us." He carries His own cross;—what pain! By the loss of blood He was so much weakened as to be pressed nigh to the ground; mentally He suffered mockery and blasphemy. But a few days ago He was saluted: "Hozanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord;" now the shouts: "Crucify Him, crucify Him." A few days ago He was received majestically; now He is led out as a base malefactor. He is mocked, He is blasphemed, He is abused, He is struck with stones, He is beaten with cords and clubs, He is so inhumanly treated that He falls to the ground beneath the heavy cross. He rises, drags the cross for a short distance, and falls again. The same treatment—only more cruel, more furious, is repeated. Again He rises, but only to fall once more after few steps. And no wonder! Hell could not invent more cruelty nor spend more fury than what Christ suffered.

But, ah! the greatest suffering was caused when Jesus met His dearly beloved mother. For some

time already she tried to meet and to see Him on His bloody way, when at last they met. Ah, what a meeting! There a most tenderly loving mother,—here a dearly beloved Son! There the mother unable to assist,—here the Son in great need of assistance! What a pitiful sight! They could only exchange looks, and this only with difficulty; for, as revelations have it, Christ was compelled to wipe the blood out of His eyes, before He could see His blessed mother. They could only exchange looks; Jesus is forced onward, Mary is pushed aside and insulted. Is it to be wondered that Jesus sank to the earth, when even the comfort of His mother's presence is denied Him! There He lies, His face buried in the dust, covered with wounds, blood and spittle, entirely fatigued; no help from the rabble or from the soldiery; yea, even the mother's help denied Him. O what suffering!

Compassion, nowhere to be found! Onward they lead,—no, they drag Him; every step is marked by His sacred blood; every step is forced by a lash or stroke or kick; and weakness increases so rapidly that they fear He might die upon the way. They obtain help for Him, they compel Simon of Cyrene to carry His cross, not through compassion, nor mercy, nor pity,—no, but through fear that by His death upon the road, they would be deprived of that horrible spectacle

of crucifixion. O what monsters in human form!

Only a few women are moved to pity. Veronica, seeing her Master covered with blood and dust, spittle and perspiration, hastens to wipe His face; others stand at a little distance expressing their compassion by shedding tears. Was this perhaps some comfort to the cross-bearing Saviour? Behold Him! Always kind He rewarded Veronica's charitable act with the imprint of His suffering countenance upon the cloth; and to the other women He addressed a few kind words. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Why? On account of the terrible scourge, the dire punishment, the divine wrath that was to come upon this unhappy city. Did this last act of Christ's benevolence make any impression upon the furious crowd? No; amid cries of blood-thirsty rage, curses, blasphemies, lashes, kicks and maltreatment of all kinds, they forced the Saviour onward, until about noon they reached the height of Golgotha, where He was to be nailed to the cross for the salvation of mankind.

Now, Christian souls, reflect upon the sufferings of Jesus Christ on His way to Calvary. Why did He endure all this? On account of the sins of the world. "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." We, His enemies by sin, have made this heavy cross; we have bur-

dened this heavy cross by the enormous multitude of our sins and crimes; but Jesus carries it, and is pressed to the ground by its weighty load. Indeed "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins;—the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," says the prophet Isaias. (53.) Look upon the cross-bearing Saviour all you who have burdened your souls by the crosses of sin; they would have pressed you into the infernal abyss, had not Jesus redeemed you by His cross. Look upon the cross-bearing Saviour, all you, who are afflicted by various crosses in life. Christ, too, suffered terribly under the weight of His cross; yet He was innocent, whilst you deserve all and much more. Why do you complain? Why do you murmur? Why do you curse and blaspheme? Why do you accuse God of injustice, when you are burdened by the crosses which you have made by your sins? Like a lamb that is led out to be slaughtered, so Jesus was led out and did not open His mouth to complain. Like Him, therefore, shall we take our cross upon ourselves with patience and resignation and follow our cross-bearing Saviour unto the end of our life.

Let us go out to meet our Saviour as did His holy mother, that by seeing Him we may be moved to pity for our souls, which have been purchased by the blood of Christ; that we may never relapse into our former sins and vices on account

of which Christ suffered those terrible falls. But above all, let us nevermore fail against the charity we owe to our neighbor; let us never transgress this most important command; but let us bear patiently with his failings as he, too, must bear with ours; let us assist him in time of need; let us, like Simon of Cyrene, help him to carry his cross, as best we can; let us be merciful to him, for Christ tells us: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matth. 5. 7.) In short, let us practice the injunction of the blessed Thomas a Kempis: "Take up thy cross and follow Jesus, and thou shalt enter life everlasting."

EXAMPLE.

St. Helen was born and brought up by heathen parents. She became the wife of the Emperor Constantine, who rejected her after his throne-ascension. Having respected the Christians at all times and being now rejected she sought consolation in the religion of the cross. She received holy baptism after her renowned son had gained, by the sign of the cross, a glorious victory. Though advanced in years she possessed a youthful, fiery zeal in the practice of devotion and good works. For a long time she entertained the desire of visiting the holy places; she sought and found the cross, upon which the blessed Saviour had died;

she and her pious son had a beautiful church erected over the sepulchre of Christ; she had one built in memory of the Annunciaton at Nazareth. For this love to Jesus and Mary and for her veneration of the holy cross and the holy places, she was rewarded by the queen of heaven with the greatest grace—a holy life and a holy death in the year 326.

PRAYER.

Obtain by thy intercession, O afflicted mother Mary, for me the grace of following Jesus by carrying my cross, which God is pleased to send me, to the end of my life in a patient and penitential manner, that following my Saviour now I may dwell with Him hereafter in heaven. Amen.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF MAY.

THE FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY : THE CRUCIFIXION.

The unjust sentence is pronounced; the scribes, pharisees and the enraged populace have gained their wicked point ;—Christ is led out to be crucified. At the head of the sorrowful procession is a herald announcing the name of the condemned, and the reason of his condemnation. After him follow the bearers of the different instruments and tools for the execution ; lastly, surrounded by a guard of soldiers, comes the condemned person. Thus we see the procession, in which Christ is led out to execution, wending its way through the thronged streets of the unhappy Jerusalem. Not like other unfortunates was Christ treated. Contrary to custom He was obliged to carry His own cross. Insulted by all with but few exceptions, abused by the vile rabble, struck and lashed by the rough soldiery, broken down by the loss of blood and by inhuman sufferings, Jesus was led forth from the hall of Pilate to be crucified. "And bearing His cross He went forth to that place, which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and with Him two

others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst." (John 19. 16.)—This, the terrible crucifixion, we contemplate in the fifth sorrowful mystery.

"Jesus, who was crucified for us." At last the divine victim has reached the spot, where He was to be sacrificed for the redemption of the sin-laden human race. The altar of sacrifice was prepared in the cross that lay there at His feet; He—the victim was soon to be fastened to it by cruel nails. For the third time was He stripped of His garments on this terrible day. Cruelly did they strip Him, tearing open the wounds that had dried up somewhat, renewing the tortures, causing His blood to flow again upon the earth, and threw Him upon the cross. He stretched himself upon the cross, offered His hands and feet to be nailed, and raising His eyes up to heaven He offered himself to His heavenly Father as the victim of atonement, as the sacrifice of reconciliation for the salvation of mankind. Is there a greater love than the love of Jesus to us?

Immediately His arm was stretched to the hole bored into the cross, and there fastened by a rope, whilst one of the executioners knelt upon His breast, another held open the right hand that so often blessed them, and a third one holding the nail upon the palm of His hand, struck it with terrible force driving it through His hand into the wood of the cross. The bones cracked, the blood

spurted up covering the arm of the executioner. O, what pain! A sweet, clear-sounding moan passed His sacred lips, after the echo of the hammer. Next the left hand was to be nailed. The nerves being broken or contracted, the hand would not reach the hole; hence they pulled with all force to stretch the arm, pulled it out of its socket, and nailed it cruelly to the cross. What torture! Yet Christ kept His eyes fixed to heaven, and moaned. The same was repeated as to His feet, only with greater cruelty, and amid the most painful lamentation of the Saviour they, too, were nailed to the cross.

Oh, who can picture to himself the sufferings of Jesus! Hands and feet nailed, His limbs pulled out of their sockets, His nerves shattered, His bones broken, His body stretched most torturously, His blood flowing from the terrible wounds of the nails! Being now nailed, they immediately raise the cross, and with an horrible thump, let it fall into the ditch prepared for it and fastened it with blocks and wedges. What excruciating torture!

There now hangs Jesus upon the cross, suspended between heaven and earth the Mediator between an offended God and sinful mankind! "Lift up your minds and eyes," says St. Francis de Sales, "and behold your Saviour stretched and cruelly nailed to the cross hanging between heaven

and earth." O what a spectacle! The words of the Psalmist are verified: "They have dug my hands and feet. They have numbered all my bones." (Ps. 21.) All nature revolts at this crime; all nature is affected at this pitiful sight!

Would that these bodily pains were all of His sufferings! No comfort at that moment; for He was surrounded by His enemies, who mocked and blasphemed Him. His disciples had fled in terror. Only His Mother and St. John and a few others so dearly beloved by Him, were there; but their sight only affected Him sorely. And the future? He sees how many renew these sufferings by their sins, how they thus render useless His painful but gracious work of redemption, how they, though once redeemed, expose themselves again to the danger of eternal condemnation. What anguish and sorrow of heart must this have caused? No wonder. Like David, He could say: "I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly. . . . . My heart is troubled; my strength has left me, and the light of my eyes itself is not with me." (Ps. 37.) O how painful!

And why, Christian souls, did Christ suffer such torments? To show His love. Even there on the cross He is all love. "Look upon the wounds of Jesus crucified," says St. Angela, "upon the blood of Jesus dying, upon the price of Jesus redeeming! His head is bowed down to give the kiss of

peace, His heart is opened to love, His arms are stretched to embrace, His body suspended to redeem." O great love of our Saviour! In His torments He prays for His murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" and yet they add mockery and blasphemy to His bodily sufferings. He dies for them, and yet He foresees that for them and many others His death is in vain. What painful knowledge!

But, Christian souls, let us not forget Mary, His blessed Mother. There she stands under the cross. Every stroke of the hammer re-echoed in her maternal heart; every moan resounded in her loving heart; every blasphemy pierced her tender soul. What sufferings to Mary! "No tongue is able to express, no intellect able to comprehend, what pains have tortured the sacred heart of Mary," says St. Bernard. She does not complain at the injustice and cruelty inflicted upon her divine Son; she does not call down imprecations upon the murderers; she does not invoke the wrath of God upon the murderers of her child: but firmly does she stand there under the cross ready to suffer the most cruel torments rather than leave her Son in the hour of agony and death. What heroism! There indeed, the sword of sorrow pierced her maternal soul.

And now let us enter deeply into this mystery. Let us again ask why Christ suffered all this?

Our conscience must answer: To show His love for us. "God commendeth His charity towards us," says St. Paul, "because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5. 8.) Let us return this love. Let us never forget, but firmly impress upon our minds what Christ has endured for us, poor sinners, to manifest His merciful love. "Learn to perceive how severe were the wounds," is the advice of St. Bernard, "on account of which it was necessary that Christ allow himself to be wounded."

But alas! What do we perceive? Do we not see many Christians walk as enemies of the cross of Christ? Are not, perhaps, we too among this unhappy and ungrateful number? Do we not see many, and perhaps we among them, renew these terrible sufferings by sin? O God, of how many may the words of St. Paul be truly spoken: "(They) are fallen away (from grace), crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making Him a mockery?" What a crime, then, is sin? Every one that commits a mortal sin, by which he falls away from grace crucifies Jesus again and makes Him a mockery. And how often is mortal sin committed? So often, that it appears quite natural to many, or of no consequence whatever. O, let us always bear in mind Christ's sufferings, and nevermore commit mortal sin. "These sins," the blessed Virgin once said to St. Bridget, "these

sins with which men now crucify my Son, are more abominable and grievous in His sight than the malice of the Jews, who nailed Him to the cross." Shun mortal sin, do not commit mortal sin!

EXAMPLE.

St. John, Gaulbert, following the profession of arms at a very troubled period, became involved in a blood-feud with a near relative. On Good Friday he met his enemy at a place, where neither could avoid the other. John would have slain his enemy, who was unarmed; but he falling upon his knees implored John for the sake of our Lord's Passion to pardon him. Grace triumphed in John who replied: "I cannot refuse what you ask in Christ's name. I grant you your life, and I give you my friendship. Pray that God may forgive me my sin. John retired to a monastery, led a penitential and holy life, and died a Saint.

PRAYER.

With thee, O most afflicted Mother, will I love the cross of thy crucified Son. Like Him will I suffer all patiently that may befall me, and pray for those who injure me. Thus will I become worthy of my dear Saviour. And thou, O Mother of sorrows, implore for me the grace to live and die united by love to thy divine Son and to thee. Amen.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF MAY.

THE FIRST GLORIOUS MYSTERY: THE RESURRECTION.

At last the day of triumph arrived. Past are the agony of the garden, the treachery of Judas, the torture of scourging, crowning with thorns and crucifixion; past are the mockery, the curses and horrid blasphemies,—past are all the sufferings of the Saviour; for now He is gloriously risen from the dead. But a few days previous the sun covered his face, to-day he rises majestically, announcing the glorious resurrection of the Saviour. A few days ago the earthly sepulchre received the Saviour, wounded, lacerated, dead; to-day it gives Him up in such majesty, that the earth quaked, and the guards departed in terror. A few days ago the Saviour was looked upon as a seducer of the people, a base malefactor, and executed as such, to-day He is risen—the Victor over His earthly enemies, and over sin, death and hell. "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; He is risen, He is not here." (Mark 16. 6.) Such are the glad tidings announced to the good women by the angel. And this also, the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we consider in the first glorious mystery.

"Jesus, who arose from the dead." But a short time before his death Christ said to His apostles: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief-priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified, and the third day he shall rise again." (Matth. 20. 18. 19.) This all occurred. He was mocked most shamefully, He was scourged most inhumanly, He was nailed to the cross, and died the most cruel death; all this happened as Christ had foretold. But as foretold He also arose on the third day from the grave. His soul united itself with His body, and majestically the Saviour comes forth from the grave. The earth trembles as if to show reverence, the soldiers become terrified and flee, the sun rises beautifully and early; a messenger clad in brilliant, white garments announces this glorious mystery: "He is risen, He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him."

And to prove His divinity it was necessary that Christ arise from the dead; for such was his prophecy. "The third day He shall arise again," are His words. And again: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2. 19.) In saying: "Destroy this temple, He meant His body; and such, too, was the Jewish belief; for they reminded Pilate of these words, and therefore de-

manded a guard to watch the grave, lest the body might be stolen and the report spread, that He was risen from the dead. But really: "He is risen, He is not here." Or should it be impossible to Him who called back to life the dead, to rise from the dead himself by His omnipotent power." Verily, "He who would not descend from the cross, arose from the grave," says St. Gregory. "For to destroy death by the resurrection was a greater miracle than to preserve life by descending."

"He is risen, He is not here." Christ Jesus rose from the dead; such is proved by His disciples. He came to them after His resurrection, He saluted them, He ate with them, He commanded Thomas to place his fingers in His wounds, that he might believe; in short He was with them, body and soul, for forty days. St. John says that when the disciples were together for fear of the Jews, "Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you, and when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord." (John 20. 19. 20.) St. Luke says: "Now whilst they (the disciples) were speaking these things, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said to them: Peace be to you; it is I, fear not. But they being troubled and frighted, supposed that they saw a spirit. And He said to

them: Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See my hands and feet, that it is I myself; handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have." (Luke 24. 36.) And thereupon He ate in their presence, and gave them the remainder. What better proofs would we ask for His resurrection.

Yet it may be said: these are His friends and disciples; therefore their testimony is not reliable. Certainly, then, the enemies' testimony is valid. Look upon them, though very unwilling, they bear witness to Christ's resurrection. When Christ arose so gloriously the guard became terrified; the soldiers hastened into the city, and made known what had happened. They were paid by Christ's enemies to say that whilst they were asleep, His disciples stole the body. But notice the inconsistency. If they feared that His body might be stolen, why not punish the guard for neglect of duty? If Christ did not arise, why employ these false measures—paying to spread falsehood? Or why pay to tell the contrary to which they had already testified? Or why contradict themselves? How can soldiers, or any one else, whilst sleeping, see what was stolen, and who did steal? Or how can any one suppose that those timid disciples would venture to go among soldiers, and even dare to break the governor's seal which had been fixed to the sepulchre? All this battles against good

sense. Hence, the soldiers, yea, the scribes and pharisees, by their words and conduct, bear ample testimony to the resurrection of Him whom they murdered upon the cross.

What glory for the Saviour of the world! He was persecuted to His last breath, now He has put His enemies to shame. They believed themselves freed from their adversary, they looked upon His cruel death as a complete success of their diabolical schemes; but how short lived their victory? On the third day He arose in all His glory and majesty, and by His presence proved His divinity, put to naught the wicked intentions of His enemies and placed them before the world in all their baseness. What a triumph!

"He is risen, He is not here." What joyful tidings for the friends of Christ Jesus, for His disciples, and above all, for His blessed Mother Mary? What joy must have filled her soul that was pierced by the sword of sorrow? What joy to her maternal heart when she again saw Him whom her soul loved—her divine Son? What glory to her who was and is the Mother of Him who conquered sin, death and hell? What exceedingly great joy to behold her Son, so cruelly maltreated, now glorified? As we are unable to understand Mary's sufferings, so are her joy and glory now incomprehensible to us.

But, Christian souls, shall we not rejoice? "He

is risen, He is not here." Yea, joy shall replenish our hearts; for now our faith is confirmed. As long as Christ was dead, our faith was dead. But now Christ is risen who once said; "I am the resurrection and life; he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live." (John 11. 25.) His resurrection proves His divinity, and the divinity of the doctrine He has taught, and of the Church He has founded. "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain," says St. Paul. "But now Christ is risen," he continues; therefore our preaching is true, our faith is not vain, but good and divine.

Again, the truth of Christ's resurrection is also the surety of our resurrection. Sooner or later we also shall die and enter a grave. Shall we remain there forever? No; for St. Paul concludes from the resurrection of Christ, that we also shall arise. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again," he says . . . . "But now Christ is risen from the dead," he continues; (I. Cor. chap. 15.) therefore there is a resurrection of the dead. We, too, shall again rise from the grave. "Our Redeemer first took death upon Himself, that we should not fear death," says St. Gregory; "He convinces us of His resurrection, that we also believe the possibility of our resurrection."

"He is risen, He is not here."—This truth sum-

mons us, poor sinners, to rise from spiritual death, —from sin. As long as we live in sin, we are spiritually dead. We are like a whitened grave,— an object of abomination ; the stone of bad habits presses down upon us, the seal of Satan is set upon us. Now Christ's resurrection summons us to leave this grave. "As Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of His Father," says St. Paul, "so we also may walk in newness of life . . . . knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that we may serve sin no longer." (Rom. 6. 4.) Let us, therefore, rise early, immediately from the grave of sin, let us roll away the stone of bad habits and tear asunder all bands that in any manner tie us to sin ; let us rise to a new life of virtue and holiness. "Do you also reckon," remarks St. Paul, "that you are dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus, our Lord." (Rom. 6. 11.)

EXAMPLE.

When the holy martyr, St. Margareth was brought before the tribunal, the enraged prefect called upon her: "How can greater nonsense be thought of, than to consider as God a man, who had been crucified?" The virgin asked : "Whence dost thou know that Christ was crucified?" He replied : "Your own writings teach it."—"Well,

then," Margareth answered, "the same books speak not only of the Passion of Christ, but also of His resurrection and glorification; how little you pause to believe the one and to deny the other? Not for the reason, that He suffered, that He died, do we believe; no! But He is risen. He has thus proved to us the power of His Divinity, and therefore we believe Him and praise His name and give our lives for His doctrines." With this profession upon her lips she was put to death.

PRAYER.

How great will be our joy, O blessed mother of our glorious Redeemer, when we also shall see Him, face to face, after this earthly life in His heavenly glory? Obtain thou for us the grace that we may bear temporal sufferings, die a happy death, and enter into life everlasting. Amen.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF MAY.

THE SECOND GLORIOUS MYSTERY: THE ASCENSION.

During forty days the gloriously risen Saviour of mankind remained with His apostles and disciples. During this time He gave His apostles important instructions, salutary commands and consolatory promises. He explained to them the sense of Scriptures, especially of those having reference to Himself, made important regulations for the welfare of His church, and appointed in the person of Peter a supreme shepherd who visibly in His stead should feed not only the lambs, but also the sheep, commissioned His apostles to go forth into the whole world, and preach His doctrines, and baptize all nations, and invested them with the power to forgive sins. He also commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, until the Holy Ghost had come upon them. "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you," He said, "and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the world. And when He had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up: and a cloud received Him

out of their sight. (Acts. 1. 8. 9.) This, the ascension of our Lord, we contemplate in the second glorious mystery.

"Jesus, who ascended into heaven." Now the moment had arrived in which Christ's former words to His apostles were verified: "I came from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and I go to the Father." (John 16. 28.) At that, sorrow occupied their hearts; but now, as the gospel says, "they went back into Jerusalem with great joy," (Luke 24. 52.) for they had received their Master's blessing, and the promise of the Paraclete.

What glory in this mystery: Jesus ascended into heaven? And how did Jesus ascend? According to His holy humanity. As God He always remained in heaven; as man He appeared in the fulness of time to effect the gracious work of reconciling all human creatures with their Creator; and now having accomplished this, He ascended into the glories of heaven with His holy humanity, with that body and soul that suffered so terribly and were in such distressing agony, and now sits at the right hand of His heavenly Father. He ascended from Mount Olivet, showing the way of suffering was the way to glory; He ascended in the presence of His apostles, before their eyes was He raised up into heaven, in order that they who witnessed His humiliation, passion and death,

may also be witnesses of His glory in His ascension to the confirmation of their faith in His divine mission; He ascended by His own power, as the reward for His merits,—rising majestically through the air and placing His feet upon the clouds of heaven; He ascended in great glory, surrounded by rays of heavenly splendor, and accompanied by the souls of those just who had been detained in limbo, to take possession of the glory—"the glory of the only begotten of the Father." He ascended into heaven to throne at the right hand of His heavenly Father, or as St. Paul says: "That you may know . . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power, . . . which He wrought in Christ raising Him up from the dead, and setting Him on His right hand in the heavenly places, above all principality, and power, and virtue, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And He hath all things under His feet; and hath made Him head over all the Church, which is His body and the fulness of Him, who is filled all in all." (Ephes. 1. 20–23.)

What must have been Mary's joy in beholding her divine Son ascending gloriously into heaven? "While they (Mary and the apostles) looked on, He was raised up: and a cloud received Him out of their sight." What human tongue can express the ardent love and ecstatic joy with which Mary's

spirit followed her divine Son into heaven? What pleasure, when she beheld her Son—the Vanquisher of all His enemies, the Deliverer of the just souls from the joyless limbo, now delivered from all earthly sufferings, clothed in heavenly glory, and accompanied by angels, ascend to His celestial home? What joy, when she beheld the heavenly gates open and her divine Son enter as the King of glory? Indeed, this blessed Mother was now grandly rewarded for all her sufferings with her divine Son, in being witness of His victory over all His enemies, of His glorious resurrection, and of His triumphal entry into His Father's heavenly home.

Great was Christ's glory in His ascension; great, no doubt, was His blessed Mother's joy at His ascension; shall we, Christian souls, not also rejoice? Indeed, cause of rejoicing we have, if we but consider, why Christ ascended into heaven. Jesus Christ ascended into heaven to celebrate a complete victory over death and hell. Though He accomplished this by His death and resurrection, there still remained a shadow of power, as long as He did not open the portals of heaven, closed by sin, and elevate Himself above the lowly realms of earth to His throne of glory and omnipotence. But now, having broken the bolts of the heavenly gates, death and hell appear in all their weakness, and His habitation on earth as a

transitory and voluntary condescension. "For which cause God also hath exalted Him," says St. Paul, "and hath given Him a name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell. And that every tongue should confess, that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." (Philip. 2. 9-11.)

Jesus ascended into heaven, in order to send us the Paraclete, that He may protect and assist us by His grace to gain the victory over all spiritual enemies, and with it also eternal glory. "But I tell you the truth," said Christ to His apostles; "it is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." (John 16. 7.)

Jesus ascended into heaven, in order that by showing His wounds to His heavenly Father, He may be our Advocate and Mediator. "Jesus hath not entered into the holy places made with hands, the patterns of the true; but into heaven itself, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us," says St. Paul to the Hebrews. (9. 24.) And St. Thomas remarks: "The Son of God speaks for us by representing to His Father His holy humanity, together with all the mysteries of His mortal life, and by making known to Him the desire He bears for our happiness."

Lastly, Jesus ascended into heaven, to prepare

for us an eternal abode. "Let not your heart be troubled," He said. "You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you; because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you; I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be." (John 14. 1-3.) What a happy knowledge that our afflictions and sufferings shall not last forever, but that, like Christ, we having passed over the mountains of tribulation, shall enter into a mansion of rest and glory. "Where I am, you also may be." He has not said: My Father's house is small and has room but for a few; "in My Father's house there are many mansions," a place for us to rest and to enjoy forever the fruits of our faithful service. Have we not great reasons to rejoice at the ascension of our blessed Saviour?

Yes; but only then shall we rejoice in this mystery, when we have endeavored to follow Christ on earth. If we desire anything ardently we will frequently think of it, we will engage our minds in studying means to have our desire realized. If, then, we desire heaven, let us, Christian souls, frequently think of it. Let us tear our hearts from this world, its treasures and pleasures; for all it has and can give us, is nothing compared to heaven. Hence St. John also says: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. . . .

The world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever." (I. 2. 15. 17.) Here, too, we have the second means of entering heaven: "He that doth the will of God, abideth forever;" and where? Surely in heaven; for God is just. He will reward the good, who obey His divine will. Let us, therefore, lead a life worthy of heaven, a life free from sin and in the service of God; then Christ's words will be realized in us: "He that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter the kingdom of heaven."

EXAMPLE.

No human tongue is able to describe perfectly the virtues of St. Aloysius Gonzaga. He was born of noble parents and brought up by a very devout Mother. She, being a zealous servant of Mary, kept her son Aloysius in the same service. And how did he comply with the wish of his mother? Beginning in his childhood he practised a special devotion to Mary. He recited the rosary with zeal; also the office. But especially did he endeavor to follow Mary's example in virtues; and so well did he succeed that he committed but two trifling faults in his life. His purity was so great that he was justly called the Angel in human flesh. He entered the Society of Jesus. There he became

a model for all. When pestilence had broken out in Italy, he waited upon the sick, but was himself infected. To his provincial who visited him, he said: "Father, I go hence." He asked: "Whither?" And Aloysius replied with joy: "Into my true home, into heaven." Thus he died.

PRAYER.

O holy Mother of my heavenly King, direct thou my thoughts to heaven. Obtain for me from thy royal Son the grace, that I tear my heart and soul from everything terrestrial, and cleave to things eternal, that thus I may become worthy to enter the everlasting glories of heaven. Amen.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF MAY.

THE THIRD GLORIOUS MYSTERY: THE MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST.

During nine days after the ascension of Christ, the disciples, with Mary, persevered with one mind in prayer. They were about to receive something great, hence they must prepare themselves; for "only so much of the grace of God shall we receive," says St. Thomas, "as we desire." The disciples withdrawn from the world, must empty their hearts from all earthly desires, and expand them by most ardent desires; for the Lord wished to replenish their hearts entirely with His spirit, in order that they become worthy recipients of His divine grace, and intrepid, energetic laborers for His work—the propagation of His holy doctrines to the uttermost parts of the world. Christ had said to His apostles: "I send the promise of My Father upon you; but stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24. 49.) They obeyed His commands. "And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in the same place: and suddenly there came a sound from

heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues, as it were of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak." (Act 2. 1-4.) This, the coming of the Holy Ghost, we contemplate in the third glorious mystery.

"Jesus, who sent the Holy Ghost." Christ had on several occasions promised to send the Holy Ghost down upon His apostles, after He had ascended into heaven. Who is the Holy Ghost?—The Holy Ghost is God, like the Father and the Son, and the third person of the most blessed Trinity. In the Old Law God already said by His prophets, that He would send His spirit (or the Holy Ghost). "I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh." (Joel 2. 28.) Again: "I will hide My face no more from them; for I have poured out My spirit upon all the house of Israel." (Ezeck. 39. 29.) Christ Jesus told His apostles that He would ask the Father to send the Paraclete—the spirit of truth—the Holy Ghost. He said that not only the Father, but also He would send Him. "And I send the promise of My Father upon you." (Luke 24. 49.) And this spirit, this promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost is true God. Christ commanded His apostles to preach

and to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. What they should do in the Father's and His name, that, too, should they do in the name of the Holy Ghost. Now, the Father is God, the Son is God, therefore also, the Holy Ghost is God. Again Christ says: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." (John 3. 5.) Such a grace, however, as entering heaven, God alone can give; hence the Holy Ghost is God.

No less clear do the apostles speak of the Holy Ghost as God, mentioning distinctly three divine persons. St. Paul says: "The grace of Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all." (I. Cor. 13. 13.) St. John writes: "There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one." (I. John 5. 7.)—One God.

The same is confirmed by the holy fathers. St. Epiphanius says: "The Holy Ghost is not separate from the Father and the Son, but is of the same Deity, of the Father and the Son." St. Augustine teaches: "The Holy Ghost is God, as the Son is God; and as the Father is God." And St. Clement of Alexandria writes: "Let us praise the one Father and Son, with the Holy Ghost, who is One in all." The same is taught in many

other passages. We must, therefore, believe in the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from both the Father and the Son, and who is to be adored and glorified with both as true God, being consubstantial and co-eternal with them.

What were the blessings of the Holy Ghost after coming down upon the apostles? We know that, before the coming of the Holy Ghost, the apostles were poor, ignorant men, striving for precedence, believing that their Master would create a temporal kingdom, each desiring the first place, timid, leaving their Master, hiding themselves, and one even denied him. But what a change on the feast of Pentecost? How clear to them are the doctrines of Jesus Christ? All doubts and uncertainty are vanished; the spirit of truth has recalled all things to their minds, whatsoever Christ had taught them. How fearless are they now? Boldly do they stand before the assembled multitudes preaching penance and baptism for the remission of sins,—not only in one place or in small towns or villages, but in Rome, Athens, Corinth, are their voices heard,—not only before the unlearned and poor, but also to emperors, governors and the learned do they announce the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Crucified. And these their words they confirm by numerous miracles. They went forth into the world to preach to all nations the truths of the Crucified,

laboring day and night, with joy and amid tears, by prayer and by the brightest examples of virtues, not fearing persecution, dungeon, torments, nor even the most cruel deaths. Whence all this? "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with confidence." (Acts 4. 31.) As the fire spreads, illuminates, destroys waste matter, purifies the metal, melts and creates anew; so were the apostles created anew by the powerful graces of the Holy Ghost, who descended upon them "in parted tongues, as it were of fire." In each of them Isaias' words are verified: "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord." (Isai. 11. 2) Shall the apostles not glorify God?

When the apostles prepared for the coming of the Holy Ghost, Mary, the blessed Mother of God, was also with them. (Acts 1. 14.) Mary, too, prepared; and why? To edify the apostles by her humble, fervent and persevering prayer, to encourage them to place in Him who was to be sent upon them their trust, and to obtain abundant graces for the young Church. As she had been a loving Mother during the earthly career of her divine Son to His followers, she wished to be such more so, since He left them to her charge,

after His death upon the cross. And what a comfort must her presence have been to the apostles? —And for us, what comfort to know that as in those days, she now still prays for the Church, she still intercedes for us, her children, and obtains for us manifold graces from the Holy Ghost. What glory to Mary is this her power?

Christ Jesus once sent the Holy Ghost upon His followers; yet, remember, Christian souls, not only once, but for ever unto the end of time. Hardly have we entered into this valley of tears, and already He, who has redeemed all mankind, sends the Holy Ghost in the Sacrament of Baptism, that being born again of water and the Holy Ghost, we may enter the kingdom of heaven. He enlightens and sanctifies the soul; and should baptismal innocence be lost unfortunately by sin, His grace again enters by the Sacrament of Penance. He takes possession of such a sanctified soul, makes her His abode, dwells in her as in His temple; He irradiates her with His divine light, He inflames her with the fire of His divine love; and He remains with her, until she separates herself from Him, until by sin she compels Him to leave. What a blessing!

But St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, mentions many other graces of the Holy Ghost. He says: "The fruit of the spirit is; charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity,

mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity." (Gal. 5. 22, 23.) All virtues that makes us true Christians, and beloved by God and man. And what graces are bestowed upon us by the Sacrament of Confirmation? They have been foretold by the prophet, and are again mentioned in the administration of this Sacrament: "The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness, the spirit of the fear of the Lord,"—all graces that will strengthen us to profess our faith with fortitude and live according to its dictates.

Let us, then, appreciate these graces, and glorify God for bestowing them upon us. Let us remove all obstacles to these graces, and pray ardently, humbly and constantly, for them. And having obtained them, let us preserve them, let us never lose them by sin, let us give due honor to the Holy Ghost for His gracious gifts, and above all, let us co-operate them, that thus we may be able to enter the glories of heaven.

EXAMPLE.

If we seek the divine light of the Holy Ghost through Mary, we shall find it. The renowned Dominican, St. Albert the Great, was ardently attached to Mary. He was very pious, but almost despaired when studying, and intended to leave the monastery. Mary appeared to him in his

sleep, asking him what he was about to do. He replied: "Ah, all my fellow-students study easily; I alone am so troubled; all my efforts to study are useless; I am the object of laughter for all." The blessed Lady answered: "Be of good cheer; thou shalt excel in all sciences; but that you may not forget, that it is not owing to thy diligence and intellect, but to my intercession, know that shortly before thy death, all thy knowledge shall leave thee." And thus it happened three years before his holy death.

PRAYER.

Teach me, holy Mary, full of grace, to pray incessantly for this good spirit, that I may not be overpowered by the spirit of worldliness, and follow the ways leading to perdition. Grant, by thy intercession, that I may lead a life according to the dictates of my faith, and be thus enabled to praise the Triune God in heaven forever. Amen.

THIRTIETH DAY OF MAY.

THE FOURTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY: THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

Christ Jesus, the Saviour of Mankind, had completed His gracious work of redemption; He suffered and died; He arose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, from whence He sent the Holy Ghost. Yet departing from this world, He left a pledge of His love,—His holy Mother. The last mention made of her in holy Scripture is, when she, with the apostles, awaited the coming of the Holy Ghost. But tradition, upon the authority of Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, of St. Andrew of Crete, and of St. John Damascene, informs us that she lived twenty-three years and several months after the ascension of Christ, and then she died, rather through desire to be united with her divine Son, than in consequence of sickness or age. The apostles, miraculously informed of Mary's approaching demise, hastened to Jerusalem, to see her once more and to obtain her maternal blessing." "Be blessed, my sons; never shall I cease to think of you," she said; and then passed away. All surround the holy corpse in the

room, filled with heavenly glory, and honor her who was so highly honored by God himself. In solemn procession the apostles carry the corpse a short distance from Jerusalem, and place it in a sepulchre, already prepared for her reception, and close it with a stone. There they continued for three days to sing hymns and psalms. On the third day Thomas, who was so far distant as not to be able to be present in her last moments, arrived. Sorrow-stricken, he requests that the sepulchre be opened, in order that he may look upon her once more in his mortal life. It was opened; but it was found empty. It exhaled a fragrant odor, and lilies sprouted forth, where her holy body had been lying. Tradition has it, that God preserved her mortal remains from corruption by taking them up into heaven. This, the Assumption of Mary, we consider in the fourth glorious mystery.

"Jesus, who took thee up into heaven." These words are to teach us that Mary did not enter heaven—body and soul at once by her own power, as did her divine Son; but that she was taken up by a special grace and privilege. It is true, we have no other proof than tradition, that Mary was received body and soul into heaven; it has not been declared a dogma of faith; but it is a well-grounded and venerable opinion. And this opinion is tenable for several reasons.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE

It is a firm, indubitable, well-defined dogma of our holy faith, that (after the ascension of Jesus Christ) those souls that depart from this life free from all sins, pure and holy, immediately arrive at the beatific vision of God. Now, Mary was conceived without sin; her soul was not, like those of other human beings, stained by original sin. This is well proven, and a dogma of faith. Again, she passed her life free from all actual sin, she being "full of grace" and "the Lord with her," as the Angel said. Hence, there was no occasion for sin. This, too, is a dogma of faith. Therefore we safely conclude that Mary's soul entered heaven immediately after her demise on earth.

"Jesus, who took thee up into heaven." This may be granted as to her soul; but how about her body? As said before, it is not dogmatically defined, but a venerable, well-authenticated tradition holds that Mary's body was taken up into heaven. And this was ever held by the church with great piety and reverence. For if Mary was not stained by sin, she should also have evaded the sentence pronounced after sin was committed: Thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return. Now Mary was free from all sin; therefore, death, was not her due. She died, like her divine Son; but as He was not given over to corruption, so may we believe that her holy body was not doomed to corruption. Moreover, Mary's body was not a body

of sin, upon which that sentence had been passed and which bears the germ of corruption within itself; but being spotless, undefiled, it should certainly never fall prey to corruption.

Again; as it would be unbecoming to think that the soul of the Mother of God was but for a moment in the power of sin, equally so would it be unbecoming to think that her pure body, from which the incarnate Son of God assumed His human nature, should be in the power of corruption. Moreover, we know that the early Christians have preserved most tenderly the mortal remains of the holy martyrs and saintly servants of God; would they have bestowed less care, reverence and affection upon her pure, mortal remains who was the Mother of their God? Yet, though the apostles remained at the sepulchre, Mary's holy body was not to be found on the third day, and Thomas was deprived of this last sight of her. From all this we may conclude, that Jesus Christ, this devoted Son of Mary, took His Mother's body and soul up into heaven. And such has been the reverential belief of our church throughout all centuries; wherefore she also celebrates, annually on the 15th of August, the feast of the Assumption of the blessed Virgin Mary.

"Jesus, who took thee up into heaven." What glory in this mystery! If, according to St. Paul, human reason can never comprehend what indes-

cribable glory God has prepared in heaven for those that love Him, "who, then, shall be able to comprehend the glory which the Lord has prepared for her, who had borne Him on earth," asks St. Bernard; "what glory will the Lord have prepared for her who loved Him, more than all men, who, from her first moment, loved her Jesus more than all men and angels!" Therefore, the church is right in exclaiming joyfully, that since Mary loved God, more than all angels, she is also exalted above all angels in heaven. And St. Antonin remarks that since the mistress is far above the servant, so also can Mary's glory never be compared to that of the angels. The angels are but servants of God, Mary is the Mother of God. In order to comprehend this the better we must remember the words of the prophet: "The queen stood on thy right hand, in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety," (Ps. 44. 10.) which St. Athanasius explains in the following manner: "Mary was placed to the right of God. It can be easily imagined with what love the most holy Trinity blessed her,—it can be thought what a reception the eternal Father has given His daughter, the divine Son His mother, the Holy Ghost His spouse. The Father crowned her by permitting her to take part in His power, the Son by allowing her to partake of His love, and the Holy Ghost of His wisdom. All three divine persons

declared her Queen of heaven and earth, they fixed her seat at the right of Jesus Christ, and commanded that she be served as the Queen."

Shall we, Christian souls, not also rejoice in Mary's glory of assumption into heaven! She was thus glorified to reward her for all her good deeds during life; for "it is certain," remarks St. Ildephonse, "that Mary's good works have infinitely excelled the good works of all Saints, wherefore, also, the greatness of her reward and glory which she received, cannot be comprehended." And, indeed, she deserved it. Consider, principally her purity of heart, on account of which she was chosen to be the Mother of God; —her faith, by which she believed the words of the heavenly messenger;—her humility, in which she, though full of grace, called herself the handmaid of the Lord;—her patience and resignation into the will of the heavenly Father, in which she endured her and her Son's poverty, persecution and sufferings; and then ask whether after such a life of virtues, she did not deserve to be taken up into the glories of heaven, where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more." (Apoc. 21. 4.) Indeed, she deserved it.

So, also, shall we be rewarded, though not in as high a degree, if we persevere in the practise of

virtue. On earth already virtue is its own reward; for it is virtue alone that gives man his true merit before God and his fellow-men. "Virtue is the step to honor, virtue is the mother of honor," says St. Bernard.—Virtue renders man truly happy by imparting tranquillity of conscience, contentedness, confidence in God and the joyful hope of eternal happiness. Virtue alone is sweet comfort in the sad hour of death to him who practised it faithfully in life, and is a certain pledge of eternal life. Let us, then, be pure of heart, like Mary; let us be faithful, like Mary; let us be humble, like Mary; let us be patient, like Mary; in short, like Mary, let us practise and advance steadily in virtue and we, too, shall be taken up into heaven.

EXAMPLE.

In early youth St. Hyacinth revealed particular love to virtue. He walked constantly in the presence of God and in the least temptation would say to himself: "Do not offend the eye of God who sees all men." With charity to God he united true charity to his neighbor, for in him all needy found sympathy and compassion and, as far as possible, also help. Besides these virtues he cherished a filial love to Mary, the blessed Mother of God. When his labors since his entrance into a Dominican monastery would per-

mit, he prayed almost day and night in a church of the blessed Lady; all his labors he recommended to the Mother of God and being blessed and assisted by her, he wrought much good, yea, he even performed miracles; on all vigils of the feasts of Mary he fasted, taking but bread and water; but especially did he endeavor to follow Mary's example in virtues. Thus he lived to the age of seventy-four years, entertaining but one wish, namely to die on the feast of the Assumption of Mary, which was granted him in the year 1257.

PRAYER.

We daily beg of thee, O good Mother, to assist us in the hour of death. Grant that our words are not recited by lips only, but that we feel the importance thereof, when we say: Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners, now and in the hour of our death. Amen.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF MAY.

THE FIFTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY: THE CORONATION OF MARY.

Now Mary has entered the glories of the heavenly kingdom. Her grand entrance has set the whole of heaven into commotion. "Who is she," the celestial spirits ask in astonishment, "who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?" (Cant. 6. 9.) "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?" (Cant. 8. 5.) It is Mary, the Mother of your God, and your Queen. Leaning upon the arm of her Son, she arrives at the throne of the eternal Father. Prostrate, she adores Him, humble and grateful to Him who hath done great things to her. Hereupon the Eternal leads her to the throne prepared for her at the right of the Deity. It represents the degree of dignity appointed to her in the land of Eternity, far above that of any created being, so that henceforth special veneration is due her. Upon her head is placed the royal diadem—representing the glory and majesty, as also the happiness allotted to

her, as the Queen of heaven, and combining within itself the diverse glory and beatitude of the other celestial beings. In her right hand is placed the sceptre, as the symbol of power granted to her by the most blessed Trinity, in heaven and on earth. In other words: Mary is crowned Queen of heaven. This,—her coronation, we consider in the fifth glorious mystery.

"Jesus, who crowned the Queen of heaven." How inexplicable must have been the rejoicing of the heavenly hosts, upon beholding their humble Queen, so majestically crowned? With what rapture must they have sung her praise? "Hail, heavenly Queen! Hail, thou beloved Daughter of the heavenly Father! Hail, thou blessed Mother of the Saviour! Hail, thou chosen Spouse of the Holy Ghost! Hail, our Queen!"—Why such greeting?—Because the heavenly Father has crowned her as His most obedient daughter. By a special grace of God she was preserved from original sin; and never was she stained by any actual sin, be it mortal or venial; for, as St. John Damascene remarks, "into this paradise (Mary) that serpent could find no entrance." Hence no inclination nor concupiscence of sin. She obeyed the will of her heavenly Father, at all times and under all circumstances, having no will but the will of God. She was crowned as God's most reverential daughter. Look upon her as a child in

the temple, as a virgin saluted by the Angel, as a Mother following her divine Son, everywhere she adored God, and bowed with reverence to His holy will in joy or sorrow. She was crowned as God's most amiable Daughter. Never was there a child so filled with love to its father, as Mary was to God.

Mary was crowned as the loving Mother of Jesus Christ. Never did there exist such a reciprocal love between mother and child, as between Mary and Jesus. Therefore, as Solomon, in order to honor his mother before all the people, placed her on a throne at his right, did Jesus place His Mother, before all heavenly citizens, upon a throne of glory. Mary was crowned as the chosen Spouse of the Holy Ghost. In her were realized the words of the canticle: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee. Come from Libanus, my spouse, come: thou shalt be crowned." (Cant. 4. 8. 9.) The soul of the just is called a temple of the Holy Ghost, and is loved above all by Him. With what affectionate love, then, must He have received Mary, who was so pure, so holy, that her soul—his temple, was never clouded by a shadow of sin? Come, thou shalt be crowned; for thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.

Such was the honor bestowed upon Mary by the most blessed Trinity. She is crowned; her throne

is placed to the right of her divine Son. And now the heavenly hosts salute her as their Queen. They may have addressed her, as was done of old to the glorious Judith: "Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord the most high God above all women . . . . Because He hath so magnified thy name this day . . . . Blessed art thou by thy God in every tabernacle of Jacob; for in every nation which shall hear thy name, the God of Israel shall be magnified on occasion of thee." (Judith 13. 23.) And why should they not joyfully salute her, who is the Mother of their heavenly King, whilst they are but His servants? She is their Queen. Though born in the flesh, she is purer than the purest seraphim, and was found worthy to be the Mother of the most holy God. She is the Queen of Angels.—Mary is saluted by the patriarchs and prophets; for she is the Mother of Him whom they so ardently desired, and so often foretold, and the most blessed of their descendants. She is the Queen of patriarchs and prophets.—Mary is saluted by the apostles; for whilst they were but disciples, she was the Mother of the heavenly Master, and their Mother, their comfort, their example during life. She is the Queen of the apostles.—Mary was saluted by the martyrs; for her heroism shown in so many and dreadful sufferings from the birth to the death of her divine Son, exceeded by far that of all the martyrs, and

those sufferings made her life a continuous martyrdom. She is the Queen of martyrs.—Mary was saluted by the confessors; for she is the example of all virtues, and encouraged by it and her assistance, they acquired those virtues that obtained for them the eternal reward of heaven. She is the Queen of confessors.—Mary was saluted by the virgins; for she was the first of all virgins, who made a sacrifice of her entire self by a vow of perpetual virginity, and thus became the model for all those who shall follow the Lamb whithersoever it goes. She is the Queen of virgins.—Mary is the Queen of all saints on account of the fulness of grace which God bestowed upon her, as also on account of the splendor of all her virtues. "Mary has received, from the moment of her conception, more graces from God than all angels, saints and men," says St. Gregory. And as to her virtues, St. Thomas of Villanova remarks: "Whatever excellent was found in any saints that all was found in Mary." Therefore Mary is the Queen of all Saints, possessing more grace than all Saints and adorned more beautifully by virtues, than any Saint. Hence, St. Bonaventure also says: "As the most blessed Virgin excelled all saints in the grace of virtues and merits, so also does she excel all the elect of God in the grace of glory and reward." What glory!

Shall we, then, not also rejoice in Mary's coro-

nation? She is our Mother, also; let us be glad and rejoice that God has so glorified her. But above all let us endeavor to be good children of this blessed Mother, and to make ourselves worthy to partake of her glory. Let us persevere in doing good unto our death. All our resolutions, all our good intentions, all our good works shall be of little avail unless we persevere; for only he that persevereth shall be crowned. Look upon Mary. Her life was one of great suffering, poverty, need, and sore trial, yet she persevered in serving God, despite of all afflictions, and is now crowned so gloriously in heaven. We too shall be crowned, if we persevere unto the end.

Let us therefore, Christian souls, remember that it is necessary to persevere, for in that moment, that we stop on our road to salvation, we take a step backward; since for "they that do not complete what they have begun," says St. Gregory, "should know that they shall lose the fruit of that which is already accomplished." We neglect our salvation which depends upon our perseverance in doing good. This Christ gives us to understand in the words: "No man, putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." (Luke 9. 62.) Again it is no more than just that we should persevere in doing good; for God never ceases to bestow benefits upon us. Hence we should continue to show our love and

gratitude by doing good unto the end of our lives; as Christ teaches: "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall remain in my love." (John 15. 9. 10.) In short, let us follow the example of Jesus, of His blessed Mother and of the holy servants of God, and the words of holy Writ shall be realized in us: "Be thou faithful unto death; and I will give thee the crown of life." (Apoc. 2. 10.)

Now, Christian souls, we have finished our task —reflections upon the holy rosary. But let it not be finished forever. Frequently reflect upon the mysteries and the beautiful prayers, of which the rosary is composed. Recite it often, especially on Saturdays and on the feasts of our blessed Lady; yea, daily, if at all possible. Remember always that this devotion is a fountain for us all, from which we may draw graces unto life everlasting. May God upon Mary's intercession grant us all.

EXAMPLE.

Among the vast number of servants of Mary, St. Alphonsus Liguori was one of the most noteworthy. From his childhood he practised virtue and devotion. Endowed with splendid mental faculties he became a counsellor-at-law; but fearing that he would become guilty of injustice, he

resolved to serve only God and his church. He became a priest, afterward bishop and the founder of the congregation of the most holy Redeemer. He devoted himself to the mission, in which by his powerful sermons, devout prayer and touching example he converted many sinners. His love to Jesus is expressed in his book: Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament; his love to Mary is revealed in the work entitled: The Glories of Mary. He served God in the work for the salvation of his fellow-men, he served Mary by many devotions, rosary and filial confidence perseveringly until his death in the year 1787.

PRAYER.

O holy Mother Mary! pray for me, thy unworthy child, that I may never act contrary to God's holy will, that I may practise only virtues and persevere unto my end, so that I may be glorified hereafter and obtain the crown of eternal life. Amen.

OCCASIONAL PRAYERS.

Every true and pious Catholic Christian will preserve in his heart a tender love and holy veneration of the blessed Mother of God. The reasons wherefore this should be done, you may learn from the first four addresses contained in this little book. Reflect upon them frequently. But as the principal aim has been to venerate Mary by the holy rosary, recite it daily during this month of May. Should it, however, be impossible, read or listen to the reading of an address daily, and thereafter recite devoutly some of the following prayers. It would be well for public or private devotion to follow this order: The Memorare of St. Bernard; the proper address for the day; the Litany of the blessed Virgin with the prayers; the prayer for the day of the week; the prayer to obtain Mary's powerful patronage, and lastly: three Paters and Ave for the poor souls in purgatory.

PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD—THE MEMORARE.

Remember, O most pious Virgin Mary! that no one ever had recourse to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy mediation without obtain-

ing relief. Confiding, then, in thy goodness and mercy, I cast myself at thy sacred feet, and do most humbly supplicate thee, O Mother of the eternal Word! to adopt me as thy child, and take upon thyself the care of my salvation. O let it not be said, my dearest Mother, that I have perished where no one ever found but grace and salvation. Amen.

THE LITANY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.
God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on us.

Holy Mary,
Holy Mother of God,
Holy Virgin of virgins,
Mother of Christ,
Mother of divine grace,
Mother most pure,
Mother most chaste,
Mother undefiled,
Mother unviolated,
} Pray for us.

Mother most amiable,
Mother most admirable,
Mother of our Creator,
Mother of our Redeemer,
Virgin most prudent,
Virgin most venerable,
Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Vessel of singular devotion,
Mystical rose,
Tower of David,
Tower of ivory,
House of gold,
Ark of the covenant,
Gate of heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the weak,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,
Queen of Angels,
Queen of patriarchs,

} Pray for us.

Queen of prophets,
Queen of apostles,
Queen of martyrs,
Queen of confessors,
Queen of virgins,
Queen of all saints,
Queen conceived without sin,
} Pray for us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Graciously hear us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, Have mercy on us, O Lord!

Christ, hear us, Christ, graciously hear us. Lord have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

Anthem: We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of thy promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY.

Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the incarnation of Christ thy Son has been made known by the

message of an angel, may by His Passion and cross be brought to the glory of His resurrection; through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

V. Pray for us, O holy Joseph.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY.

We beseech thee, O Lord, that we may be assisted by the merits of the Spouse of thy most holy Mother; so that what we are unable to obtain of ourselves, may be granted us through His intercession; Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

SUNDAY.

PRAYER FOR HOLINESS.

O Mary, thou sweetest, thou holiest Mother, always ready to help, I have many necessities pressing my heart, in which I must request thy assistance; but especially must thou help me in my first and most important business—to become holy and eternally happy. It is thy wish that I enter the glories of heaven; therefore do not withdraw from me thy helping hand. Surrounded by enemies that would separate me from thy divine Son, attacked by temptations that would drag me into sin, yea, chained by the snares of sin, I look up to thee, bright star of the sea!

Lead me out of all these snares and temptations, and rescue me from all dangers that surround my soul. And when the last moment of my life approaches, then may thy holy name be my protection, then let me pronounce thy and thy divine Son's sacred name, so that my last thought be of thee and of my Saviour, my last breath utter: Jesus, Mary! Amen.

MONDAY.

PRAYER FOR GRACE AND VIRTUE.

O, Mother of divine grace, impart to me from the fulness of grace that thou possessest, those graces which I need mostly. Oh, by my sins I fell into great want; and whither will a poor beggar turn? Whither else but where there is abundance, as also kindness that will donate thereof? Hence I turn to thee who didst say: "With me there are riches, with me indestructible treasures, that I may enrich those that love me." O, let me not ask in vain! I seek not transitory riches; I seek only that which tends to the peace and welfare of my soul; I seek a pure heart to receive abundant graces, and a resolute will to practise virtue; I seek strength to follow thy example, and to please forever thy divine Son. As thou always didst this, thou wilt also hear my prayer, O Mother of divine grace. Amen.

TUESDAY.

PRAYER FOR FIRMNESS OF WILL.

O Mother of true love, hasten to assist me in my weakness, in my inconstancy and negligence, and pray for me that I may now begin to put into practice my good resolutions and may nevermore fail therein. Thou knowest, impediments oppose my feeble will, and how small temptations often conquer me. O, how poor and miserable am I! Help me, thou faithful Virgin, and stand to my assistance, that I may not waver, and thus miss my eternal destiny. And when the last hour and the last combat arrives, assist me, O kind Mother, comfort me, strengthen me, that I may not despair, but gain the everlasting crown, that is promised to all that persevere unto the end. Amen.

WEDNESDAY.

PRAYER FOR MERCY AND COMPASSION.

O Mary, mother of mercy, who is able to fathom the depths of the kindness, compassion and love of thy maternal heart? Worldly queens are rich in treasures, diamonds and jewels, but thou art rich in compassion and mercy; thy treasures are the sinners whom thou hast saved, the sick whom thou hast healed, body and soul, the afflicted

whom thou hast comforted. O, turn thy compassionate eyes upon me, for I am also of that numberless multitude languishing in this valley of tears and misery, and so much in need of thy comfort and thy help. Behold, in iniquity I have been conceived, and in sin I am born; I groan under the heavy weight of sufferings and temptations that surround me. O Mary, thou refuge of sinners, save me by thy intercession; thou health of the infirm, heal the wounds that I have made by my sins; thou comforter of the afflicted, pour comfort into my heart, when distress seizes it; thou Mother of mercy, abandon me not in the hour of my death. Amen.

THURSDAY.

PRAYER FOR PURITY OF HEART.

O Mary, Queen of virgins, who dost excel all angels of heaven in purity, and all virgins, that follow the Lamb and sing the ever new canticle, in virginal innocence, look upon me, poor pilgrim on earth, from thy lofty throne, and let me not perish in the sinful lusts of this world. Ah, an abominable fire has enveloped the human heart, and the enemy of my soul seeks to kindle into flames its sparks that also glow in my heart, in order to destroy me by it. O do not permit, that I succumb to impure temptations, and that

the impure spirit triumph over me. Come to my assistance, thou Virgin ever pure and most powerful; readily will I fight against my spiritual enemies, but do thou not allow me to fall. Support me when I waver; preserve me when I am in danger of falling. Purify my thoughts, sanctify my desires, watch over all my senses, and infuse into my poor heart thy great love of purity. This I ask of thee, Queen of virgins; obtain by thy powerful intercession for me the treasure of a pure heart, that the words of thy divine Son may be realized in me forever: "Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God." Amen.

FRIDAY.

PRAYER FOR PRAISE OF MARY.

O Mary, heavenly Queen, what tongue can speak thy praise! The angels bow before thee, admire thy power and glory, and praise thy goodness. The patriarchs look with astonishment upon thee, and praise thy merits and thy virtues. The prophets rejoice to behold thee, and to praise thy incomprehensible dignity as Virgin and Mother of God. All saints glorify thee and salute as their heavenly Queen. Behold, I also lie prostrate before thee; deign to look upon me with pleasure and maternal kindness. Glorious Queen, full of grace and mercy, let me join into

thy praise on earth, and be made worthy to praise thee and sing thy glory in heaven. Amen.

SATURDAY.

PRAYER FOR A HAPPY DEATH.

O Mary, Mother of Mercy, I fear and tremble when I think of my sins, and of the hour of death. If now, already, I feel the pang of a sin-stained conscience, if now the weight of my sins press me almost to despair, what shall I do in the sad hour of death? O my protectress, in the blood of thy divine Son, and in thy mighty intercession, I place my hope. Obtain for me from my blessed Redeemer, sincere sorrow for my sins, true contrition and a resolute will of amendment. And when the moment of death approaches, help me, Mary, in my struggle, strengthen me against all assaults of Satan, assist me to gain the crown of victory. Let me now frequently call upon thee, that with the sacred name of Jesus, and thy holy name upon my tongue, I may depart from this life in peace and enter the celestial abodes of eternity. Amen.

PRAYER TO OBTAIN MARY'S PATRONAGE.

(By St. Alphonsus Liguori.)

Most holy and immaculate Virgin, my mother Mary, to thee, the Mother of my God, the Queen

of the world, the advocate, the hope, and the refuge of sinners, I have recourse to-day, I, who am the most miserable of all. I render thee my humble homage, O great Queen, and I thank thee for all the graces which thou hast bestowed upon me until now, particularly for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, O most amiable Sovereign, and for the love I bear thee, I promise to serve thee always, and to do all in my power to make others love thee also. I place in thee, after God, all my hopes. I confide my salvation to thy care. Accept me for thy servant, and take me under thy protection, O Mother of mercy, and since thou art so powerful with God, deliver me from all temptations, or rather obtain for me the strength to triumph over them until death. Obtain for me, I beseech thee, a perfect love for Jesus Christ. To thee I look for grace to die a good death. O my Mother, by the love which thou bearest to God, I beseech thee to help me at all times, and particularly at the decisive moment of death. Do not leave me until thou seest me safe in heaven, occupied in blessing thee, and singing thy mercies throughout eternity. Amen.

N. B.—An indulgence of three hundred days is attached to this prayer, when recited before an image or picture of the Blessed Virgin. And when recited daily for a month, a plenary indulgence on the ordinary conditions on any one day at choice.

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